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I. READING

I. ON GIVING AN

ON THE ART O

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

VISCOUNT MORPETH, M.P.,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

WITH THE AFFECTIONATE RESPECT

OF THE AUTHOR.

April, 1847.

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Presented by:-
Mr. K. H. Thakore.

00147800

CHAPTER I.

NONE but those who, like myself, have once lived in intellectual society, and have then been deprived of it for years, can appreciate the delight of finding it again. Not that I have any right to complain, if I were fated to live as a recluse for ever. I can add little, or nothing, to the pleasure any company; I like to listen rather than to t and when anything apposite does occur to n generally the day after the conversa place. I do not, however, for these defects of min thinking that I susta not always an easy

Great, then, was that my old pupil, M had long been vacan to my pleasure, his c lawyer, also an old

quently in the course of the autumn. Milverton was at that time writing some essays which he occasionally read to Ellesmere and myself. The conversations which then took place I am proud to say that I have chronicled. I think they must be interesting to the world in general, though of course not so much so as to me.

Milverton and Ellesmere were my favourite pupils. Many is the heartache I have had at finding that those boys, with all their abilities, would do nothing at the University. But it was in vain to urge them. I grieve to say that neither of them had any ambition of the right kind. Once I thought I had stimulated [illegible]llesmere to the proper care and exertion: when, to astonishment and vexation, going into his rooms [illegible]a month before an examination, I found that, [illegible]ting up his subjects, like a reasonable [illegible]endeavouring to invent some [illegible]ething which had been Over this he had [illegible]oment I saw it was [illegible]me and patience in [illegible]e beaten path. [illegible]n used to play me, [illegible]y demonstration of [illegible]enting all manner of

subtle difficulties, and declaring they could not go on while these stumbling-blocks lay in their way! But I am getting into college gossip, which may in no way delight my readers. And I am fancying, too, that Milverton and Ellesmere are the boys they were to me: but I am now the child to them. During the years that I have been quietly living here, they have become versed in the ways of the busy world. And though they never think of asserting their superiority, I feel it, and am glad to do so.

My readers would, perhaps, like me to tell them something of the characters of Ellesmere and Milverton; but it would ill become me to give that insight into them which I, their college friend and tutor, imagine I have obtained. Their friendship I could never understand. It was not on the surface very warm, and their congeniality seemed to result more from one or two large common principles of thought, than from any peculiar similarity of taste, or from great affection on either side. Yet I should wrong their friendship if I were to represent it otherwise than a most true-hearted one; more so, perhaps, than some of softer texture. What needs be seen of them individually will be by their words, which I hope I have in the main retained.

The place where we generally met in fine weather

was on the lawn before Milverton's house. It was an eminence which commanded a series of valleys sloping towards the sea. And, as the sea was not more than nine miles off, it was a matter of frequent speculation with us whether the landscape was bounded by air or water. In the first valley was a little town of red brick houses, with poplars coming up amongst them. The ruins of a castle, and some water which, in olden times, had been the lake in "the pleasaunce," were between us and the town. The clang of an anvil, or the clamour of a horn, or busy wheelwright's sounds, came faintly up to us when the wind was south.

I must not delay my readers longer with my gossip, but bring them at once into the conversation that preceded our first reading.

Milverton. I tell you, Ellesmere, these are the only heights I care to look down from, the heights of natural scenery.

Ellesmere. Pooh! my dear Milverton, it is only because the particular mounds which the world calls heights, you think you have found out to be but larger ant-heaps. Whenever you have cared about anything, a man more fierce and unphilosophical in the pursuit of it I never saw. To influence men's minds by writing for them, is that no ambition?

Milverton. It may be, but I have it not. Let any kind critic convince me that what I am now doing is useless, or has been done before, or that, if I leave it undone, some one else will do it to my mind: and I should fold up my papers, and watch the turnips grow in that field there, with a placidity that would, perhaps, seem very spiritless to your now restless and ambitious nature, Ellesmere.

Ellesmere. If something were to happen which will not, then—O Philosophy, Philosophy, you, too, are a good old nurse, and rattle your rattles for your little people, as well as old Dame world can do for hers. But what are we to have to-day for our first reading?

Milverton. An Essay on Truth.

Ellesmere. Well, had I known this before, it is not the novelty of the subject which would have dragged me up the hill to your house. By the way, philosophers ought not to live upon hills. They are much more accessible, and I think quite as reasonable, when, Diogenes-like, they live in tubs upon flat ground. Now for the essay.

TRUTH.

TRUTH is a subject which men will not suffer to grow old. Each age has to fight with its own falsehoods: each man with his love of saying to himself and those around him pleasant things and things serviceable for to-day, rather than the things which are. Yet a child appreciates at once the divine

necessity for truth; never asks, "What harm is there in saying the thing that is not?" and an old man finds, in his growing experience, wider and wider applications of the great doctrine and discipline of truth.

Truth needs the wisdom of the serpent as well as the simplicity of the dove. He has gone but a little way in this matter who supposes that it is an easy thing for a man to speak the truth, "the thing he troweth;" and that it is a casual function which may be fulfilled at once after any lapse of exercise. But, in the first place, the man who would speak truth, must know what he troweth. To do that, he must have an uncorrupted judgment. By this is not meant a perfect judgment or even a wise one, but one which, however it may be biassed, is not bought—is still a judgment. But some people's judgments are so entirely gained over by vanity, selfishness, passion, or inflated prejudices and fancies long indulged in; or they have the habit of looking at everything so carelessly, that they see nothing truly. They cannot interpret the world of reality. And this is the saddest form of lying, "the lie that sinketh in," as Bacon says, which becomes part of the character and goes on eating the rest away.

Again, to speak truth, a man must not only have

that martial courage which goes out, with sound of drum and trumpet, to do and suffer great things; but that domestic courage which compels him to utter small sounding truths in spite of present inconvenience and outraged sensitiveness or sensibility. Then he must not be in any respect a slave to self-interest. Often it seems as if but a little misrepresentation would gain a great good for us; or, perhaps, we have only to conceal some trifling thing, which, if told, might hinder unreasonably, as we think, a profitable bargain. The true man takes care to tell, notwithstanding. When we think that truth interferes at one time or another with all a man's likings, hatings, and wishes, we must admit, I think, that it is the most comprehensive and varied form of self-denial.

Then, in addition to these great qualities, truth-telling in its highest sense requires a well-balanced mind. For instance, much exaggeration, perhaps the most, is occasioned by an impatient and easily moved temperament which longs to convey its own vivid impressions to other minds, and seeks by amplifying to gain the full measure of their sympathy. But a true man does not think what his hearers are feeling, but what he is saying.

More stress might be laid than has been on the intellectual requisites for truth, which are probably the

best part of intellectual cultivation; and as much caused by truth as causing it.* But, putting the requisites for truth at the fewest, see of how large a portion of the character truth is the resultant. If you were to make a list of those persons accounted the religious men of their respective ages, you would have a ludicrous combination of characters essentially dissimilar. But true people are kindred. Mention the eminently true men, and you will find that they are a brotherhood. There is a family likeness throughout them.

If we consider the occasions of exercising truthfulness and descend to particulars, we may divide the matter into the following heads:—truth to one's self—truth to mankind in general—truth in social relations—truth in business—truth in pleasure.

1. Truth to one's self. All men have a deep interest that each man should tell himself the truth. Not only will he become a better man, but he will understand them better. If men knew themselves, they could not be intolerant to others.

It is scarcely necessary to say much about the advantage of a man knowing himself for himself. To

* See *Statesman*, p. 30.

get at the truth of any history is good; but a man's own history—when he reads that truly, and, without a mean and over-solicitous introspection, knows what he is about and what he has been about, it is a Bible to him. "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned before the Lord." David knew the truth about himself. But truth to one's self is not merely truth about one's self. It consists in maintaining an openness and justness of soul which brings a man into relation with all truth. For this, all the senses, if you might so call them, of the soul must be uninjured; that is, the affections and the perceptions must be just. For a man to speak the truth to himself comprehends all goodness; and for us mortals can only be an aim.

2. Truth to mankind in general. This is a matter which, as I read it, concerns only the higher natures. Suffice it to say, that the withholding large truths from the world may be a betrayal of the greatest trust.

3. Truth in social relations. Under this head come the practices of making speech vary according to the person spoken to; of pretending to agree with the world when you do not; of not acting according to what is your deliberate and well-advised opinion

because some mischief may be made of it by persons whose judgment in the matter you do not respect; of maintaining a wrong course for the sake of consistency; of encouraging the show of intimacy with those whom you never can be intimate with; and many things of the same kind. These practices have elements of charity and prudence as well as fear and meanness in them. Let those parts which correspond to fear and meanness be put aside. Charity and prudence are not parasitical plants which require boles of falsehood to climb up upon. It is often extremely difficult in the mixed things of this world to act truly and kindly too; but therein lies one of the great trials of a man, that his sincerity should have kindness in it, and his kindness truth.

4. Truth in business. The more truth you can get into any business, the better. Let the other side know the defects of yours, let them know how you are to be satisfied, let there be as little to be found out as possible (I should say nothing), and if your business be an honest one, it will be best tended in this way. The talking, bargaining, and delaying that would thus be needless, the little that would then have to be done over again, the anxiety that would be put aside, would even in a worldly way be "great gain." It is not,

perhaps, too much to say, that the third part of men's lives is wasted by the effect, direct or indirect, of falsehoods.

Still, let us not be swift to imagine that lies are never of any service. A recent prime minister said, that he did not know about truth always prevailing and the like; but lies had been very successful against his government. And this was true enough. Every lie has its day. There is no preternatural inefficacy in it by reason of its falseness. And this is especially the case with those vague injurious reports which are no man's lies, but all men's carelessness. But even as regards special and unmistakable falsehood, we must admit that it has its success. A complete being might deceive with wonderful effect; however, as nature is always against a liar, it is great odds in ordinary mortals. Wolsey talks of

> "Negligence
> Fit for a fool to fall by,"

when he gives Henry the wrong packet; but the Cardinal was quite mistaken. That kind of negligence was just the thing of which far-seeing and thoughtful men are capable; and which, if there were no higher motive, should induce them to rely on truth alone. A very close vulpine nature, all eyes, all ears, may succeed better in deceit. But it is a sleepless

business. Yet, strange to say, it is had recourse to in the most spendthrift fashion, as the first and easiest thing that comes to hand.

In connection with truth in business, it may be observed that if you are a truthful man, you should be watchful over those whom you employ; for your subordinate agents are often fond of lying for your interests, as they think. Show them at once that you do not think with them, and that you will disconcert any of their inventions by breaking in with the truth. If you suffer the fear of seeming unkind to prevent your thrusting well-meant inventions aside, you may get as much pledged to falsehoods as if you had coined and uttered them yourself.

5. Truth in pleasure. Men have been said to be sincere in their pleasures: but this is only that the taste and habits of men are more easily discernible in pleasure than in business. The want of truth is as great a hindrance to the one as to the other. Indeed, there is so much insincerity and formality in the pleasurable department of human life, especially in social pleasures, that instead of a bloom there is a slime upon it, which deadens and corrupts the thing. One of the most comical sights to superior beings must be to see two human creatures with elaborate

speech and gestures making each other exquisitely uncomfortable from civility: the one pressing what he is most anxious that the other should not accept, and the other accepting only from the fear of giving offence by refusal. There is an element of charity in all this too; and it will be the business of a just and refined nature to be sincere and considerate at the same time. This will be better done by enlarging our sympathy, so that more things and people are pleasant to us, than by increasing the civil and conventional part of our nature, so that we are able to do more seeming with greater skill and endurance. Of other false hindrances to pleasure, such as ostentation and pretences of all kinds, there is neither charity nor comfort in them. They may be got rid of altogether, and no moaning made over them. Truth, which is one of the largest creatures, opens out the way to the heights of enjoyment, as well as to the depths of self-denial.

It is difficult to think too highly of the merits and delights of truth; but there is often in men's minds an exaggerated notion of some bit of truth, which proves a great assistance to falsehood. For instance, the shame of some particular small falsehood, exaggeration, or insincerity becomes a bugbear which scares a man into a career of false dealing. He has begun

making a furrow a little out of the line, and he ploughs on in it to try and give some consistency and meaning to it. He wants almost to persuade himself that it was not wrong, and entirely to hide the wrongness from others. This is a tribute to the majesty of truth; also to the world's opinion about truth. It proceeds, too, upon the notion that all falsehoods are equal, which is not the case; or on some fond craving for a show of perfection, which is sometimes very inimical to the reality. The practical, as well as the high-minded view in such cases, is for a man to think how he can be true now. To attain that, it may, even for this world, be worth while for a man to admit that he is inconsistent, and even that he has been untrue. His hearers, did they know anything of themselves, would be fully aware that he was not singular, except in the courage of owning his insincerity.

Ellesmere. That last part requires thinking about. If you were to permit men, without great loss of reputation, to own that they had been insincere, you might break down some of that majesty of truth you talk about. And bad men might avail themselves of any facilities of owning insincerity, to commit more of it. I can imagine

that the apprehension of this might restrain a man from making any such admission as you allude to, even if he could make up his mind to do it otherwise.

Milverton. Yes; but can anything be worse than a man going on in a false course? Each man must look to his own truthfulness, and keep that up as well as he can, even at the risk of saying, or doing, something which may be turned to ill account by others. We may think too much about this reflection of our external selves. Let the real self be right. I am not so fanciful as to expect men to go about clamouring that they have been false; but at no risk of letting people see that, or of even being obliged to own it, should they persevere in it.

Dunsford. Milverton is right, I think.

Ellesmere. Do not imagine that I am behind either of you in a wish to hold up truth. My only doubt was as to the mode. For my own part, I have such faith in truth, that I take it mere concealment is in most cases a mischief. And I should say, for instance, that a wise man would be sorry that his fellows should think better of him than he deserves. By the way, that is a reason why I should not like to be a writer of moral essays, Milverton —one should be supposed to be so very good.

Milverton. Only by thoughtless people then. There is a saying given to Rousseau, not that he ever did say it, for I believe it was a misprint, but it was a possible saying for him, "Chaque homme qui pense est méchant." Now, without going the length of this aphorism, we may say that what has been well written, has been well suffered.

"He best can paint them who has felt them most."

And, so, though we should not exactly declare that writers, who have had much moral influence, have been wicked men, yet we may admit that they have been amongst the most struggling, which implies anything but serene self-possession and perfect spotlessness. If you take the great ones, Luther, Shakespeare, Goethe, you see this at once.

Dunsford. David, St. Paul.

Milverton. Such men are like great rocks on the sea-shore. By their resistance, terraces of level land are formed; but the rocks themselves bear many scars and ugly indents, while the sea of human difficulty presents the same unwrinkled appearance in all ages. Yet it has been driven back.

Ellesmere. But has it lost any of its bulk, or only gone elsewhere? One part of the resemblance certainly is, that these same rocks, which were bulwarks, become, in their turn, dangers.

Milverton. Yes, there is always loss in that way. It is seldom given to man to do unmixed good. But it was not this aspect of the simile that I was thinking of: it was the scarred appearance.

Dunsford. Scars not always of defeat or flight: scars in the front.

Milverton. Ah, it hardly does for us to talk of victory or defeat, in these cases; but we may look at the contest itself as something not bad, terminate how it may. We lament over a man's sorrows, struggles, disasters, and shortcomings; yet they were possessions too. We talk of the origin of evil and the permission of evil. But what is evil? We mostly speak of sufferings and trials

as good, perhaps, in their result; but we hardly admit that they may be good in themselves. Yet they are knowledge—how else to be acquired, unless by making men as gods, enabling them to understand without experience. All that men go through may be absolutely the best for them—no such thing as evil, at least in our customary meaning of the word. But, you will say, they might have been created different and higher. See where this leads to. Any sentient being may set up the same claim: a fly that it had not been made a man: and so the end would be, that each would complain of not being all.

Ellesmere. Say it all over again, my dear Milverton: it is rather hard. [Wordsworth did so, in nearly the same words.] I think I have heard it all before. But you may have it as you please. I do not say this irreverently, but the truth is, I am too old and too earthly to enter upon these subjects. I think, however, that the view is a stout-hearted one. It is somewhat in the same vein of thought that you see in Carlyle's Works about the contempt of happiness. But in all these cases, one is apt to think of the sage in "Rasselas," who is very wise about human misery, till he loses his daughter. Your fly illustration has something in it. Certainly when men talk big about what might have been done for man, they omit to think what might be said, on similar grounds, for each sentient creature in the universe. But here have we been meandering off into origin of evil, and uses of great men, and wickedness of writers, &c., whereas I meant to have said something about the essay. How would you answer what Bacon maintains? "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure."

Milverton. He is not speaking of the lies of social life, but of self-deception. He goes on to class under that head "vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would." These things are the sweetness of "the lie that sinketh in." Many a man has a kind of mental kaleidoscope, where the bits of broken glass are his own merits and fortunes, and they fall into harmonious arrangements and delight him—often most mischievously and to his ultimate detriment; but they are a present pleasure.

Ellesmere. Well, I am going to be true in my pleasures: to take a long walk alone. I have got a difficult case for an opinion, which I [illegible] and think over.

Dunsford. Shall we have [illegible] reading to-morrow?

Milverton. Yes, if you are [illegible] in the humour for it.

CHAPTER II.

As the next day was fine, we agreed to have our reading in the same spot that I have described before. There was scarcely any conversation worth noting, until after Milverton had read us the following essay on Conformity.

CONFORMITY.

THE conformity of men is often a far poorer thing than that which resembles it amongst the lower animals. The monkey imitates from imitative skill and gamesomeness: the sheep is gregarious, having no sufficient will to form an independent project of its own. But man often loathes what he imitates, and conforms to what he knows to be wrong.

It will ever be one of the nicest problems for a man to solve, how far he shall profit by the thoughts of other men, and not be enslaved by them. He comes into the world, and finds swaddling clothes ready for his mind as well as his body. There is a vast scheme

of social machinery set up about him; and he has to discern how he can make it work with him and for him, without becoming part of the machinery himself. In this lie the anguish and the struggle of the greatest minds. Most sad are they, having mostly the deepest sympathies, when they find themselves breaking off from communion with other minds. They would go on, if they could, with the opinions around them. But, happily, there is something to which a man owes a larger allegiance than to any human affection. He would be content to go away from a false thing, or quietly to protest against it; but in spite of him the strife in his heart breaks into burning utterance by word or deed.

Few, however, are those who venture, even for the shortest time, into that hazy world of independent thought, where a man is not upheld by a crowd of other men's opinions, but where he must find a footing of his own. Among the mass of men, there is little or no resistance to conformity. Could the history of opinions be fully written, it would be seen how large a part in human proceedings the love of conformity, or rather the fear of non-conformity, has occasioned. It has triumphed over all other fears; over love, hate, pity, sloth, anger, truth, pride, comfort, self-interest, vanity, and maternal love. It

has torn down the sense of beauty in the human soul, and set up in its place little ugly idols which it compels us to worship with more than Japanese devotion. It has contradicted nature in the most obvious things, and been listened to with abject submission. Its empire has been no less extensive than deep-seated. The serf to custom points his finger at the slave to fashion—as if it signified whether it is an old or a new thing which is irrationally conformed to. The man of letters despises both the slaves of fashion and of custom, but often runs his narrow career of thought, shut up, though he sees it not, within close walls which he does not venture even to peep over.

It is hard to say in what department of human thought and endeavour conformity has triumphed most. Religion comes to one's mind first; and well it may when one thinks what men have conformed to in all ages in that matter. If we pass to art, or science, we shall see there too the wondrous slavery which men have endured—from puny fetters moreover, which one stirring thought would, as we think, have burst asunder. The above, however, are matters not within every one's cognizance; some of them are shut in by learning or the show of it; and plain "practical" men would say, they follow where they

have no business but to follow. But the way in which the human body shall be covered is not a thing for the scientific and the learned only: and is allowed on all hands to concern, in no small degree, one half at least of the creation. It is in such a simple thing as dress that each of us may form some estimate of the extent of conformity in the world. A wise nation, unsubdued by superstition, with the collected experience of peaceful ages, concludes that female feet are to be clothed by crushing them. The still wiser nations of the west have adopted a swifter mode of destroying health, and creating angularity, by crushing the upper part of the female body. In such matters nearly all people conform. Our brother man is seldom so bitter against us, as when we refuse to adopt at once his notions of the infinite. But even religious dissent were less dangerous and more respectable than dissent in dress. If you want to see what men will do in the way of conformity, take an European hat for your subject of meditation. I dare say there are twenty-two millions of people at this minute, each wearing one of these hats in order to please the rest. As in the fine arts, and in architecture especially, so in dress, something is often retained that was useful when something else was beside it.

To go to architecture for an instance, a pinnacle is retained, not that it is of any use where it is, but in another kind of building it would have been. That style of building, as a whole, has gone out of fashion, but the pinnacle has somehow or other kept its ground and must be there, no one insolently going back to first principles and asking what is the use and object of building pinnacles. Similar instances in dress will occur to my readers. Some of us are not skilled in such affairs; but looking at old pictures we may sometimes see how modern clothes have attained their present pitch of frightfulness and inconvenience. This matter of dress is one in which, perhaps, you might expect the wise to conform to the foolish; and they have.

When we have once come to a right estimate of the strength of conformity, we shall, I think, be more kindly disposed to eccentricity than we usually are. Even a wilful or an absurd eccentricity is some support against the weighty common-place conformity of the world. If it were not for some singular people who persist in thinking for themselves, in seeing for themselves, and in being comfortable, we should all collapse into a hideous uniformity.

It is worth while to analyse that influence of the

world which is the right arm of conformity. Some persons bend to the world in all things, from an innocent belief that what so many people think must be right. Others have a vague fear of the world as of some wild beast which may spring out upon them at any time. Tell them they are safe in their houses from this myriad-eyed creature: they still are sure that they shall meet with it some day, and would propitiate its favour at any sacrifice. Many men contract their idea of the world to their own circle, and what they imagine to be said in that circle of friends and acquaintances is their idea of public opinion—"as if," to use a saying of Southey's, "a number of worldlings made a world." With some unfortunate people, the much dreaded "world" shrinks into one person of more mental power than their own, or perhaps merely of coarser nature; and the fancy as to what this person will say about anything they do, sits upon them like a nightmare. Happy the man who can embark his small adventure of deeds and thoughts upon the shallow waters round his home, or send them afloat on the wide sea of humanity, with no great anxiety in either case as to what reception they may meet with! He would have them steer by the stars, and take what wind may come to them.

A reasonable watchfulness against conformity will not lead a man to spurn the aid of other men, still less to reject the accumulated mental capital of ages. It does not compel us to dote upon the advantages of savage life. We would not forego the hard-earned gains of civil society because there is something in most of them which tends to contract the natural powers, although it vastly aids them. We would not, for instance, return to the monosyllabic utterance of barbarous men, because in any formed language there are a thousand snares for the understanding. Yet we must be most watchful of them. And in all things, a man must beware of so conforming himself, as to crush his nature and forego the purpose of his being. We must look to other standards than what men may say or think. We must not abjectly bow down before rules and usages; but must refer to principles and purposes. In few words, we must think, not whom we are following, but what we are doing. If not, why are we gifted with individual life at all? Uniformity does not consist with the higher forms of vitality. Even the leaves of the same tree are said to differ, each one from all the rest. And can it be good for the soul of a man "with a biography of his own like to no one else's," to subject itself without thought to the opinions and ways of others: not

to grow into symmetry, but to be moulded down into conformity?

Ellesmere. Well, I rather like that essay. I was afraid, at first, it was going to have more of the fault into which you essay-writers generally fall, of being a comment on the abuse of a thing, and not on the thing itself. There always seems to me to want another essay on the other side. But I think at the end, you protect yourself against misconstruction. In the spirit of the essay you know of course that I quite agree with you. Indeed I differ from all the ordinary biographers of that independent gentleman, Don't Care. I believe Don't Care came to a good end. At any rate he came to some end. Whereas numbers of people never have beginning, or ending, of their own. An obscure dramatist, Milverton, whom we know of, makes one of his characters say, in reply to some world-fearing wretch:

> "Where you, you think
> What others think, or what you think they'll say,
> Shaping your course by something scarce more tangible
> Than dreams, at best the shadows on the stream
> Of aspen trees by flickering breezes swayed—
> Load me with irons, drive me from morn till night,
> I am not the utter slave which that man is
> Whose sole word, thought, and deed are built on what
> The world may say of him."

Milverton. Never mind the obscure dramatist. But, Ellesmere, you really are unreasonable, if you suppose

that, in the limits of a short essay, you can accurately distinguish all you write between the use and the abuse of a thing. The question is, will people misunderstand you —not, is the language such as to be logically impregnable? Now, in the present case, no man will really suppose it is a wise and just conformity that I am inveighing against.

Ellesmere. I am not sure of that. If everybody is to have independent thought, would there not be a fearful instability and want of compactness? Another thing, too —conformity often saves so much time and trouble.

Milverton. Yes; it has its uses. I do not mean, in the world of opinion and morality, that it should be all elasticity and no gravitation: but at least enough elasticity to preserve natural form and independent being.

Ellesmere. I think it would have been better if you had turned the essay another way, and instead of making it on conformity had made it on interference. That is the greater mischief and the greater folly, I think. Why do people unreasonably conform? Because they fear unreasonable interference. War, I say, is interference on a small scale compared with the interference of private life. Then the absurdity on which it proceeds; that men are all alike, or that it is desirable that they should be; and that what is good for one is good for all.

Dunsford. I must say, I think, Milverton, you do not give enough credit for sympathy, good-nature, and humility as material elements in the conformity of the world.

Ellesmere. I am not afraid, my dear Dunsford, of the essay doing much harm. There is a power of sleepy

conformity in the world. You may just startle your conformists for a minute, but they gravitate into their old way very soon. You talk of their humility, Dunsford, but I have heard people who have conformed to opinions, without a pretence of investigation, as arrogant and intolerant towards anybody who differed from them, as if they stood upon a pinnacle of independent sagacity and research.

Dunsford. One never knows, Ellesmere, on which side you are. I thought you were on mine a minute or two ago; and now you come down upon me with more than Milverton's anti-conforming spirit.

Ellesmere. The greatest mischief, as I take it, of this slavish conformity, is in the reticence it creates. People will be, what are called, intimate friends, and yet no real interchange of opinion takes place between them. A man keeps his doubts, his difficulties, and his peculiar opinions to himself. He is afraid of letting anybody know that he does not exactly agree with the world's theories on all points. There is no telling the hindrance that this is to truth.

Milverton. A great cause of this, Ellesmere, is in the little reliance you can have on any man's secrecy. A man finds that what, in the heat of discussion, and in the perfect carelessness of friendship, he has said to his friend, is quoted to people whom he would never have said it to; knowing that it would be sure to be misunderstood, or half-understood, by them. And so he grows cautious; and is very loath to communicate to anybody his more cherished opinions, unless they fall in exactly with the stream. Added to which, I think there is in these times less than

there ever was of a proselytising spirit : and people are content to keep their opinions to themselves—more perhaps from indifference than from fear.

Ellesmere. Yes, I agree with you.

By the way, I think your taking dress as an illustration of extreme conformity is not bad. Really it is wonderful the degree of square and dull hideousness to which, in the process of time and tailoring, and by severe conformity, the human creature's outward appearance has arrived. Look at a crowd of men from a height, what an ugly set of ants they appear ! Myself, when I see an Eastern man, one of the people attached to their embassies, sweeping by us in something flowing and stately, I feel inclined to take off my hat to him (only that I think the hat might frighten him), and say, Here is a great, unhatted, uncravated, bearded man, not a creature clipt and twisted and tortured into tailorhood.

Dunsford. Ellesmere broke in upon me just now, so that I did not say all that I meant to say. But, Milverton, what would you admit that we are to conform to ? In silencing the general voice, may we not give too much opportunity to our own headstrong suggestions, and to wilful licence ?

Milverton. Yes : to be somewhat deaf to the din of the world may be no gain, even loss, if then we only listen more to the worst part of ourselves : but in itself it is a good thing to silence that din. It is at least a beginning of good. If anything good is then gained, it is not a sheepish tendency, but an independent resolve growing out of our nature. And, after all, when we talk of non-conformity, it may only be that we non-conform to the

immediate sect of thought or action about us, to conform to a much wider thing in human nature.

Ellesmere. Ah me! how one wants a moral essayist always at hand to enable one to make use of moral essays.

Milverton. Your rules of law are grand things—the proverbs of justice; yet has not each case its specialities, requiring to be argued with much circumstance, and capable of different interpretations? Words cannot be made into men.

Dunsford. I wonder you answer his sneers, Milverton.

Ellesmere. I must go and see whether words cannot be made into guineas: and then guineas into men is an easy thing. These trains will not wait even for critics, so, for the present, good-bye.

CHAPTER III.

ELLESMERE soon wrote us word that he would be able to come down again: and I agreed to be at Worth-Ashton (Milverton's house) on the day of his arrival. I had scarcely seated myself at our usual place of meeting before the friends entered, and after greeting me, the conversation thus began:

Ellesmere. Upon my word, you people who live in the country have a pleasant time of it. As Milverton was driving me from the station through Durley Wood, there was such a rich smell of pines, such a twittering of birds, so much joy, sunshine, and beauty, that I began to think, if there were no such place as London, it really would be very desirable to live in the country.

Milverton. What a climax! But I am always very suspicious, when Ellesmere appears to be carried away by any enthusiasm, that it will break off suddenly, like the gallop of a post-horse.

Dunsford. Well, what are we to have for our essay?

Milverton. Despair.

Ellesmere. I feel equal to anything just now, and so, if it must be read sometime or other, let us have it now.

Milverton. You need not be afraid. I want to take away, not to add gloom. Shall I read?

We assented, and he began.

DESPAIR.

DESPAIR may be serviceable when it arises from a temporary prostration of spirits; during which the mind is insensibly healing, and her scattered power silently returning. This is better than to be the sport of a teasing hope without reason. But to indulge in despair as a habit is slothful, cowardly, short-sighted; and manifestly tends against nature. Despair is then the paralysis of the soul.

These are the principal causes of despair—remorse, the sorrows of the affections, worldly trouble, morbid views of religion, native melancholy.

REMORSE.

Remorse does but add to the evil which bred it, when it promotes, not penitence, but despair. To have erred in one branch of our duties does not unfit us for the performance of all the rest, unless we suffer the dark spot to spread over our whole nature, which

may happen almost unobserved in the torpor of despair. This kind of despair is chiefly grounded on a foolish belief that individual words or actions constitute the whole life of man: whereas they are often not fair representatives of portions even of that life. The fragments of rock in a mountain stream may tell much of its history, are in fact results of its doings, but they are not the stream. They were brought down when it was turbid; it may now be clear: they are as much the result of other circumstances as of the action of the stream; their history is fitful: they give us no sure intelligence of the future course of the stream, or of the nature of its waters: and may scarcely show more than that it has not been always as it is. The actions of men are often but little better indications of the men themselves.

A prolonged despair arising from remorse is unreasonable at any age, but if possible, still more so when felt by the young. To think, for example, that the great Being who made us could have made eternal ruin and misery inevitable to a poor half-fledged creature of eighteen or nineteen! And yet how often has the profoundest despair from remorse brooded over children of that age and eaten into their hearts.

There is frequently much selfishness about remorse.

Put what has been done at the worst. Let a man see his own evil word, or deed, in full light, and own it to be black as hell itself. He is still here. He cannot be isolated. There still remain for him cares and duties; and, therefore, hopes. Let him not in imagination link all creation to his fate. Let him yet live in the welfare of others, and, if it may be so, work out his own in this way: if not, be content with theirs. The saddest cause of remorseful despair is when a man does something expressly contrary to his character: when an honourable man, for instance, slides into some dishonourable action; or a tender-hearted man falls into cruelty from carelessness; or, as often happens, a sensitive nature continues to give the greatest pain to others from temper, feeling all the time, perhaps, more deeply than the persons aggrieved. All these cases may be summed up in the words, "That which I would not, that I do," the saddest of all human confessions, made by one of the greatest men. However, the evil cannot be mended by despair. Hope and humility are the only supports under this burden. As Mr Carlyle says,

"What are faults, what are the outward details of a life; if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, true, often-baffled, never-ended struggle of it, be forgotten? 'It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' Of

all acts, is not, for a man, *repentance* the most divine? The deadliest sin, I say, were that same supercilious consciousness of no sin; that is death; the heart so conscious is divorced from sincerity, humility, and fact; is dead: it is 'pure' as dead dry sand is pure. David's life and history, as written for us in those Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, down as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended; ever, with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose, begun anew. Poor human nature! is not a man's walking, in truth, always that: a 'succession of falls!' Man can do no other. In this wild element of a Life, he has to struggle onwards; now fallen, deep abased; and ever, with tears, repentance, with bleeding heart, he has to rise again, struggle again still onwards. That his struggle *be* a faithful unconquerable one: this is the question of questions."

THE SORROWS OF THE AFFECTIONS.

The loss by death of those we love has the first place in these sorrows. Yet the feeling in this case, even when carried to the highest, is not exactly despair, having too much warmth in it for that. Not much can be said in the way of comfort on this head. Queen Elizabeth, in her hard, wise way,

writing to a mother who had lost her son, tells her that she will be comforted in time; and why should she not do for herself what the mere lapse of time will do for her? Brave words! and the stern woman, more earnest than the sage in "Rasselas," would have tried their virtue on herself. But I fear they fell somewhat coldly on the mother's ear. Happily, in these bereavements, kind Nature with her opiates, day by day administered, does more than all the skill of the physician-moralists. Sir Thomas Browne says,

"Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities, miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which, notwithstanding, is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions."

The good knight thus makes much comfort out of our physical weakness. But something may be done in a very different direction, namely, by spiritual

strength. By elevating and purifying the sorrow, we may take it more out of matter as it were, and so feel less the loss of what is material about it.

The other sorrows of the affections which may produce despair, are those in which the affections are wounded, as jealousy, love unrequited, friendship betrayed, and the like. As, in despair from remorse, the whole life seems to be involved in one action: so in the despair we are now considering, the whole life appears to be shut up in the one unpropitious affection. Yet human nature, if fairly treated, is too large a thing to be suppressed into despair by one affection, however potent. We might imagine that if there were anything that would rob life of its strength and favour, it is domestic unhappiness. And yet how numerous is the band of those whom we know to have been eminently unhappy in some domestic relation, but whose lives have been full of vigorous and kindly action. Indeed the culture of the world has been largely carried on by such men. As long as there is life in the plant, though it be sadly pent in, it will grow towards any opening of light that is left for it.

WORLDLY TROUBLE.

This appears too mean a subject for despair, or, at least, unworthy of having any remedy, or soothing, thought out of it. Whether a man lives in a large room or a small one, rides or is obliged to walk, gets a plenteous dinner every day, or a sparing one, do not seem matters for despair. But the truth is, that worldly trouble, such, for instance, as loss of fortune, is seldom the simple thing that poets would persuade us.

> "The little or the much she gave is quietly resigned;
> Content with poverty my soul I arm,
> And virtue, though in rags, will keep me warm."

So sings Dryden, paraphrasing Horace, but each of them, with their knowledge of the world, cross-questioned in prose, could have told us how the stings of fortune really are felt. The truth is, that fortune is not exactly a distinct isolated thing which can be taken away—"and there an end." But much has to be severed, with undoubted pain in the operation. A man mostly feels that his reputation for sagacity, often his honour, the comfort, too, or

supposed comfort, of others are embarked in his fortunes. Mere stoicism, and resolves about fitting fortune to one's self, not one's self to fortune, though good things enough in their way, will not always meet the whole of the case. And a man who could bear personal distress of any kind with Spartan indifference, may suffer himself to be overwhelmed by despair growing out of worldly trouble. A frequent origin of such despair, as indeed of all despair (not by any means excluding despair from remorse), is pride. Let a man say to himself, "I am not the perfect character I meant to be; this is not the conduct I had imagined for myself; these are not the fortunate circumstances I had always intended to be surrounded by." Let him at once admit that he is on a lower level than his ideal one; and then see what is to be done there. This seems the best way of treating all that part of worldly trouble which consists of self-reproval. We scarcely know of any outward life continuously prosperous (and a very dull one it would be): why should we expect the inner life to be one course of unbroken self-improvement, either in prudence, or in virtue?

Before a man gives way to excessive grief about the fortunes of his family being lost with his own, he should think whether he really knows wherein lies the

welfare of others. Give him some fairy power, inexhaustible purses or magic lamps, not, however, applying to the mind; and see whether he could make those whom he would favour good or happy. In the East, they have a proverb of this kind, Happy are the children of those fathers who go to the evil one. But for anything that our Western experience shows, the proverb might be reversed, and, instead of running thus, Happy are the sons of those who have got money anyhow, it might be, Happy are the sons of those who have failed in getting money. In fact, there is no sound proverb to be made about it either way. We know nothing about the matter. Our surest influence for good or evil over others is through themselves. Our ignorance of what is physically good for any man may surely prevent anything like despair with regard to that part of the fortunes of others dear to us, which, as we think, is bound up with our own.

MORBID VIEWS OF RELIGION.

As religion is the most engrossing subject that can be presented to us, it will be considered in all states of mind and by all minds. It is impossible but that the most hideous and perverted views of religion must arise. To combat the particular views which

may be supposed to cause religious despair, would be too theological an undertaking for this essay. One thing only occurs to me to say, namely, that the lives and the mode of speaking about themselves adopted by the founders of Christianity, afford the best contradiction to religious melancholy that I believe can be met with.

NATIVE MELANCHOLY.

There is such a thing. Jacques, without the "sundry contemplation" of his travels, or any "simples" to "compound" his melancholy from, would have ever been wrapped in a "most humorous sadness." It was innate. This melancholy may lay its votaries open to any other cause of despair, but having mostly some touch of philosophy (if it be not absolutely morbid), it is not unlikely to preserve them from any extremity. It is not acute, but chronic.

It may be said in its favour that it tends to make men indifferent to their own fortunes. But then the sorrow of the world presses more deeply upon them. With large open hearts, the untowardness of things present, the miseries of the past, the mischief, stupidity, and error which reign in the world, at times almost crush you melancholy men. Still, out

of their sadness may come their strength, or, at least, the best direction of it. Nothing, perhaps, is lost; not even sin—much less sorrow.

Ellesmere. I am glad you have ended as you have: for, previously, you seemed to make too much of getting rid of all distress of mind. I always liked that passage in "Philip van Artevelde," where Father John says,

> "He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend.
> Eternity mourns that."

You have a better memory than I have: how does it go on?

Milverton.

> "'Tis an ill cure
> For life's worst ills, to have no time to feel them.
> Where sorrow's held intrusive and turned out,
> There wisdom will not enter, nor true power,
> Nor aught that dignifies humanity."

Still this does not justify despair, which was what I was writing about.

Ellesmere. Perhaps it was not a just criticism of mine. One part of the subject you have certainly omitted. You do not tell us how much there often is of physical disorder in despair. I daresay you will think it a coarse and unromantic mode of looking at things; but I must confess I agree with what Leigh Hunt has said somewhere, that one can walk down distress of mind—even remorse, perhaps.

Milverton. Yes : I am for the Peripatetics against all other philosophers.

Ellesmere. By the way, there is a passage in one of Hazlitt's essays, I thought of while you were reading, about remorse and religious melancholy. He speaks of mixing up religion and morality ; and then goes on to say, that Calvinistic notions have obscured and prevented self-knowledge.*

Give me the essay—there is a passage I want to look at. This comparison of life to a mountain stream, the rocks brought down by it being the actions, is too much worked out. When we speak of similes not going on

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* The passage which must have been alluded to is this: "The stricter tenets of Calvinism, which allow of no medium between grace and reprobation, and doom man to eternal punishment for every breach of the moral law, as an equal offence against infinite truth and justice, proceed (like the paradoxical doctrine of the Stoics) from taking a half-view of this subject, and considering man as amenable only to the dictates of his understanding and his conscience, and not excusable from the temptations and frailty of human ignorance and passion. The mixing up of religion and morality together, or the making us accountable for every word, thought, or action, under no less a responsibility than our everlasting future welfare or misery, has also added incalculably to the difficulties of self-knowledge, has superinduced a violent and spurious state of feeling, and made it almost impossible to distinguish the boundaries between the true and false, in judging of human conduct and motives. A religious man is afraid of looking into the state of his soul, lest at the same time he should reveal it to heaven ; and tries to persuade himself that by shutting his eyes to his true character and feelings, they will remain a profound secret, both here and hereafter."

four legs, it implies, I think, that a simile is at best but a four-legged animal. Now this is almost a centipede of a simile. I think I have had the same thought as yours here, and I have compared the life of an individual to a curve. You both smile. Now I thought that Dunsford at any rate would be pleased with this reminiscence of college days. But to proceed with my curve. You may have numbers of the points, through which it passes given; and yet know nothing of the nature of the curve itself. See, now, it shall pass through here and here, but how it will go in the interval, what is the law of its being, we know not. But this simile would be too mathematical, I fear.

Milverton. I hold to the centipede.

Ellesmere. Not a word has Dunsford said all this time.

Dunsford. I like the essay. I was not criticising as we went along, but thinking that perhaps the greatest charm of books is, that we see in them that other men have suffered what we have. Some souls we ever find who could have responded to all our agony, be it what it may. This at least robs misery of its loneliness.

Ellesmere. On the other hand, the charm of intercourse with our fellows, when we are in sadness, is that they do not reflect it in any way. Each keeps his own trouble to himself, and often pretending to think and care about other things, comes to do so for the time.

Dunsford. Well, but you might choose books which would not reflect your troubles.

Ellesmere. But the fact of having to make a choice to do this, does away, perhaps, with some part of the benefit:

whereas, in intercourse with living men, you take what you find, and you find that neither your trouble, nor any likeness of it, is absorbing other people. But this is not the whole reason: the truth is, the life and impulses of other men are catching: you cannot explain exactly how it is that they take you out of yourself.

Milverton. No man is so confidential as when he is addressing the whole world. You find, therefore, more comfort for sorrow in books than in social intercourse. I mean more direct comfort; for I agree with what Ellesmere says about society.

Ellesmere. In comparing men and books, one must always remember this important distinction—that one can put the books down at any time. As Macaulay says, "Plato is never sullen. Cervantes is never petulant. Demosthenes never comes unseasonably. Dante never stays too long."

Milverton. Besides, one can manage to agree so well, intellectually, with a book; and intellectual differences are the source of half the quarrels in the world.

Ellesmere. Judicious shelving!

Milverton. Judicious skipping will nearly do. Now when one's friend, or one's self, is crotchety, dogmatic, or disputatious, one cannot turn over to another day.

Ellesmere. Don't go, Dumsford. Here is a passage in the essay I meant to have said something about—"why should we expect the inner life to be one course of unbroken self-improvement," &c.—You recollect? Well, it puts me in mind of a conversation between a complacent poplar and a grim old [illegible] which I overheard the other day. The poplar said, that it grew up quite straight,

heavenwards, that all its branches pointed the same way, and always had done so. Turning to the oak, which it had been talking at before for some time, the poplar went on to remark, that it did not wish to say anything unfriendly to a brother of the forest, but those warped and twisted branches seemed to show strange struggles. The tall thing concluded its oration by saying, that it grew up very fast, and that when it had done growing, it did not suffer itself to be made into huge floating engines of destruction. But different trees had different tastes. There was then a sound from the old oak, like an "ah" or a "whew," or, perhaps, it was only the wind amongst its resisting branches: and the gaunt creature said that it had had ugly winds from without and cross-grained impulses from within; that it knew it had thrown out awkwardly a branch here and a branch there, which would never come quite right again it feared; that men worked it up, sometimes for good and sometimes for evil—but that at any rate it had not lived for nothing. The poplar began again immediately, for this kind of tree can talk for ever, but I patted the old oak approvingly and went on.

Milverton. Well, your trees divide their discourse somewhat Ellesmerically: they do not talk with the simplicity La Fontaine's would; but there is a good deal in them. They are not altogether sappy.

Ellesmere. I really thought of this fable of mine the other day as I was passing the poplar at the end of the valley, and I determined to give it you on the first occasion.

Dunsford. I hope, Ellesmere, you do not intend to

put sarcastic notions into the sap of our trees hereabouts. There's enough of sarcasm in you to season a whole forest.

Ellesmere. Dunsford is afraid of what the trees may say to the country gentlemen, and whether they will be able to answer them. I will be careful not to make the trees too clever.

Milverton. Let us go and try if we can hear any more forest talk. The winds, shaped into voices by the leaves, say many things to us at all times.

CHAPTER IV.

In the course of our walk Milverton promised to read the following essay on Recreation the next day. I have no note of anything that was said before the reading.

RECREATION.

THIS subject has not had the thought it merits. It seems trivial. It concerns some hours in the daily life of each of us; but it is not connected with any subject of human grandeur, and we are rather ashamed of it. Schiller has some wise, but hard words that relate to it. He perceives the pre-eminence of the Greeks, who could do many things. He finds that modern men are units of great nations; but not great units themselves. And there is some room for this reasoning of his.

Our modern system of division of labour divides wits also. The more necessity there is, therefore, for finding in recreation something to expand men's

intelligence. There are intellectual pursuits almost as much divided as pin-making: and many a man goes through some intellectual process, for the greater part of his working-hours, which corresponds with the making of a pin's head. Must there not be some danger of a general contraction of mind from this convergence of attention upon something very small, for so considerable a portion of a man's life?

What answer can civilization give to this? It can say that greater results are worked out by the modern system: that though each man is doing less himself than he might have done in former days, he sees greater and better things accomplished: and that his thoughts, not bound down by his petty occupation, travel over the work of the human family. There is a great deal, doubtless, in this argument; but man is not altogether an intellectual recipient. He is a constructive animal also. It is not the knowledge that you can pour into him that will satisfy him, or enable him to work out his nature. He must see things for himself; he must have bodily work and intellectual work different from his bread-getting work; or he runs the danger of becoming a contracted pedant with a poor mind and a sickly body.

I have seen it quoted from Aristotle, that the end of labour is to gain leisure. It is a great saying. We

have in modern times a totally wrong view of the matter. Noble work is a noble thing, but not all work. Most people seem to think that any business is in itself something grand; that to be intensely employed, for instance, about something which has no truth, beauty, or usefulness in it, which makes no man happier or wiser, is still the perfection of human endeavour, so that the work be intense. It is the intensity, not the nature, of the work, that men praise. You see the extent of this feeling in little things. People are so ashamed of being caught for a moment idle, that if you come upon the most industrious servants or workmen whilst they are standing looking at something which interests them, or fairly resting, they move off in a fright, as if they were proved, by a moment's relaxation, to be neglectful of their work. Yet it is the result that they should mainly be judged by, and to which they should appeal. But amongst all classes, the working itself, incessant working, is the thing deified. Now what is the end and object of most work? To provide for animal wants. Not a contemptible thing by any means, but still it is not all in all with man. Moreover, in those cases where the pressure of bread-getting is fairly past, we do not often find men's exertions lessened on that account. There enter

into their minds as motives, ambition, a love of hoarding, or a fear of leisure, things which, in moderation, may be defended or even justified, but which are not so peremptory and upon the face of them excellent, that they at once dignify excessive labour.

The truth is, that to work insatiably requires much less mind than to work judiciously, and less courage than to refuse work that cannot be done honestly. For a hundred men whose appetite for work can be driven on by vanity, avarice, ambition, or a mistaken notion of advancing their families, there is about one who is desirous of expanding his own nature and the nature of others in all directions, of cultivating many pursuits, of bringing himself and those around him in contact with the universe in many points, of being a man and not a machine.

It may seem as if the preceding arguments were directed rather against excessive work, than in favour of recreation. But the first object in an essay of this kind should be to bring down the absurd estimate that is often formed of mere work. What ritual is to the formalist, or contemplation to the devotee, business is to the man of the world. He thinks he cannot be doing wrong as long as he is doing that.

No doubt hard work is a great police agent. If

everybody were worked from morning till night and then carefully locked up, the register of crimes might be greatly diminished. But what would become of human nature? Where would be the room for growth in such a system of things? It is through sorrow and mirth, plenty and need, a variety of passions, circumstances, and temptations, even through sin and misery, that men's natures are developped.

Again, there are people who would say, "Labour is not all; we do not object to the cessation of labour —a mere provision for bodily ends; but we fear the lightness and vanity of what you call recreation." Do these people take heed of the swiftness of thought—of the impatience of thought? What will the great mass of men be thinking of, if they are taught to shun amusements and the thoughts of amusement? If any sensuality is left open to them, they will think of that. If not sensuality, then avarice, or ferocity for "the cause of God," as they would call it. People who have had nothing else to amuse them, have been very apt to indulge themselves in the excitement of persecuting their fellow-creatures.

Our nation, the northern part of it especially, is given to believe in the sovereign efficacy of dulness. To be sure, dulness and solid vice are apt to go hand

in hand. But then, according to our notions, dulness is in itself so good a thing—almost a religion.

Now, if ever a people required to be amused, it is we sad-hearted Anglo-Saxons. Heavy eaters, hard thinkers, often given up to a peculiar melancholy of our own, with a climate that for months together would frown away mirth if it could—many of us with very gloomy thoughts about our hereafter—if ever there were a people who should avoid increasing their dulness by all work and no play, we are that people. "They took their pleasure sadly," says Froissart, "after their fashion." We need not ask of what nation Froissart was speaking.

There is a theory which has done singular mischief to the cause of recreation and of general cultivation. It is that men cannot excel in more things than one; and that if they can, they had better be quiet about it. "Avoid music, do not cultivate art, be not known to excel in any craft but your own," says many a worldly parent, thereby laying the foundation of a narrow, greedy character, and destroying means of happiness and of improvement which success, or even real excellence, in one profession only cannot give. This is, indeed, a sacrifice of the end of living for the means.

Another check to recreation is the narrow way in

which people have hitherto been brought up at schools and colleges. The classics are pre-eminent works. To acquire an accurate knowledge of them is an admirable discipline. Still, it would be well to give a youth but few of these great works, and so leave time for various arts, accomplishments, and knowledge of external things exemplified by other means than books. If this cannot be done but by over-working, then it had better not be done; for of all things, that must be avoided. But surely it can be done. At present, many a man who is versed in Greek metre, and afterwards full of law reports, is childishly ignorant of nature. Let him walk with an intelligent child for a morning, and the child will ask him a hundred questions about sun, moon, stars, plants, birds, building, farming, and the like, to which he can give very sorry answers, if any. Or, at the best, he has but a second-hand acquaintance with nature. Men's conceits are his main knowledge. Whereas, if he had any pursuit connected with nature, all nature is in harmony with it, is brought into his presence by it: and it affords at once cultivation and recreation.

But, independently of those cultivated pursuits which form a high order of recreation, boyhood should never pass without the boy's learning several

modes of recreation of the humbler kind. A parent, or teacher, seldom does a kinder thing by the child under his care, than when he instructs it in some manly exercise, some pursuit connected with nature out of doors, or even some domestic game. In hours of fatigue, anxiety, sickness, or worldly ferment, such means of amusement may delight the grown-up man when other things would fail.

An indirect advantage, but a very considerable one, attendant upon various modes of recreation, is, that they provide opportunities of excelling in something to boys and men who are dull in things which form the staple of education. A boy cannot see much difference between the nominative and the genitive cases—still less any occasion for aorists—but he is a good hand at some game or other; and he keeps up his self-respect, and the respect of others for him, upon his prowess in that game. He is better and happier on that account. And it is well, too, that the little world around him should know that excellence is not all of one form.

There are no details about recreation in this essay, the object here being mainly to show the worth of recreation; and to defend it against objections from the over-busy and the over-strict. The sense of the beautiful, the desire for comprehending nature, the

love of personal skill and prowess, are not things implanted in men merely to be absorbed in producing and distributing the objects of our most obvious animal wants. If civilization required this, civilization would be a failure. Still less should we fancy that we are serving the cause of godliness, when we are discouraging recreation. Let us be hearty in our pleasures, as in our work, and not think that the gracious Being who has made us so open-hearted to delight, looks with dissatisfaction at our enjoyment, as a hard taskmaster might, who in the glee of his slaves could see only a hindrance to their profitable working. And with reference to our individual cultivation, we may remember that we are not here to promote incalculable quantities of law, physic, or manufactured goods, but to become men; not narrow pedants, but wide-seeing, mind-travelled men. Who are the men of history to be admired most? Those whom most things became: who could be weighty in debate, of much device in council, considerate in a sick-room, genial at a feast, joyous at a festival, capable of discourse with many minds, large-souled, not to be shrivelled up into any one form, fashion, or temperament. The contemporaries would have told us that men might have various accomplishments and hearty enjoyments, and not for that be the less

effective in business, or less active in benevolence. I distrust the wisdom of asceticism as much as I do that of sensuality: Simeon Stylites no less than Sardanapalus.

Ellesmere. You alluded to Schiller at the beginning of the essay: can you show me his own words? I have a lawyer's liking for the best evidence.

Milverton. When we go in, I will show you some passages which bear me out in what I have made him say—at least, if the translation is faithful.*

* This was one of the passages which Milverton afterwards read to us:—

"Thus, however much may be gained for the world as a whole by this fragmentary cultivation, it is not to be denied that the individuals whom it befalls are cursed for the benefit of the world. An athletic frame, it is true, is fashioned by gymnastic exercises, but a form of beauty only by free and uniform action. Just so the exertions of single talents can create extraordinary men indeed, but happy and perfect men only by their uniform temperature. And in what relation should we stand, then, to the past and coming ages, if the cultivation of human nature made necessary such a sacrifice? We should have been the slaves of humanity, and drudged for her century after century, and stamped upon our mutilated natures the humiliating traces of our bondage—that the coming race might nurse its moral healthfulness in blissful leisure, and unfold the free growth of its humanity!

"But can it be intended that man should neglect himself for any particular design? Ought nature to deprive us, by its design, of a perfection which reason, by its own, prescribes to us? Then

Ellesmere. I have had a great respect for Schiller ever since I heard that saying of his about death. "Death cannot be an evil, for it is universal."

Dunsford. Very noble and full of faith.

Ellesmere. Touching the essay, I like it well enough; but, perhaps, people will expect to find more about recreation itself; not only about the good of it, but what it is, and how it is to be got.

Milverton. I do not incline to go into detail about the matter. The object was to say something for the respectability of recreation, not to write a chapter of a book of sports. People must find out their own ways of amusing themselves.

Ellesmere. I will tell you what is the paramount thing to be attended to in all amusements—that they should be short. Moralists are always talking about "short-lived" pleasures: would that they were!

Dunsford. Hesiod told the world, some two thousand years ago, how much greater the half is than the whole.

Ellesmere. Dinner-givers and managers of theatres should forthwith be made aware of that fact. What a sacrifice of good things, and of the patience and comfort of human beings, a cumbrous modern dinner is! I always long to get up and walk about.

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it must be false that the development of single faculties makes the sacrifice of totality necessary; or, if indeed the law of nature presses thus heavily, it becomes us to restore, by a higher art, this totality in our nature which art has destroyed."—*The Philosophical and Æsthetical Letters and Essays of* SCHILLER, *Translated by* J. WEISS, pp. 74, 75.

Dunsford. Do not talk of modern dinners. Think what a Roman dinner must have been.

Milverton. Very true. It has always struck me that there is something quite military in the sensualism of the Romans—an "arbiter bibendi" chosen, and the whole feast moving on with fearful precision and apparatus of all kinds. Come, come! the world's improving, Ellesmere.

Ellesmere. Had the Romans public dinners? Answer me that. Imagine a Roman, whose theory, at least, of a dinner was that it was a thing for enjoyment, whereas we often look on it as a continuation of the business of the day—I say, imagine a Roman girding himself up, literally girding himself up to make an after-dinner speech.

Milverton. I must allow that is rather a barbarous practice.

Ellesmere. If charity, or politics, cannot be done without such things, I suppose they are useful in their way; but let nobody ever imagine that they are a form of pleasure. People smearing each other over with stupid flattery, and most of the company being in dread of receiving some compliment which should oblige them to speak!

Dunsford. I should have thought, now, that you would always have had something to say, and therefore that you would not be so bitter against after-dinner speaking.

Ellesmere. No; when I have nothing to say, I can say nothing.

Milverton. Would it not be a pleasant thing if rich people would ask their friends sometimes to public amuse-

ments—order a play for them, for instance—or at any rate, provide some manifest amusement? They might, occasionally with great advantage, abridge the expense of their dinners, and throw it into other channels of hospitality.

Ellesmere. Ah, if they would have good acting at their houses, that would be very delightful; but I cannot say that the being taken to any place of public amusement would much delight me. By the way, Milverton, what do you say of theatres in the way of recreation? This decline of the drama, too, is a thing you must have thought about: let us hear your notions.

Milverton. I think one of the causes sometimes assigned, that reading is more spread, is a true and an important one; but, otherwise, I fancy that the present decline of the drama depends upon very small things which might be remedied. As to a love of the drama going out of the human heart, that is all nonsense. Put it at the lowest, what a great pleasure it is to hear a good play read. And, again, as to serious pursuits unfitting men for dramatic entertainments, it is quite the contrary. A man, wearied with care and business, would find more change of ideas with less fatigue, in seeing a good play, than in almost any other way of amusing himself.

Dunsford. What are the causes then of the decline of the drama?

Milverton. In England, or rather in London,—for London is England for dramatic purposes; in London, then, theatrical arrangements seem to be framed to drive away people of sense. The noisome atmosphere, the

difficult approach, the over-size of the great theatres, the intolerable length of performances.

Ellesmere. Hear! hear!

Milverton. The crowding together of theatres in one part of the town, the lateness of the hours——

Ellesmere. The folly of the audience, who always applaud in the wrong place——

Dunsford. There is no occasion to say any more; I am quite convinced.

Milverton. But these annoyances need not be. Build a theatre of moderate dimensions; give it great facility of approach; take care that the performances never exceed three hours; let lions and dwarfs pass by without any endeavour to get them within the walls; lay aside all ambition of making stage waves which may almost equal real Ramsgate waves to our cockney apprehensions. Of course there must be good players and good plays.

Ellesmere. Now we come to the part of Hamlet.

Milverton. Good players and good plays are both to be had, if there were good demand for them. But, I was going to say, let there be all these things, especially let there be complete ventilation, and the theatre will have the most abundant success. Why, that one thing alone, the villanous atmosphere at most public places, is enough to daunt any sensible man from going to them.

Dunsford. There should be such a choice of plays—not merely Chamberlain-clipt—as any man or any woman could go to.

Milverton. There should be certainly, but how is such a choice to be made, if the people who could regulate it,

for the most part, stay away? It is a dangerous thing, the better classes leaving any great source of amusement and instruction wholly, or greatly, to the less refined classes.

Dunsford. Yes, I must confess it is.

Great part of your arguments apply to musical as well as to theatrical entertainments. Do you find similar results with respect to them?

Milverton. Why, they are not attended by any means as they would be, or made what they might be, if the objections I mentioned were removed.

Dunsford. What do you say to the out-of-door entertainments for a town population?

Milverton. As I said before, my dear Dunsford, I cannot give you a chapter of a "Book of Sports." There ought, of course, to be parks for all quarters of the town: and I confess it would please me better to see, in holiday times and hours of leisure, hearty games going on in these parks, than a number of people sauntering about in uncomfortably new and unaccustomed clothes.

Ellesmere. Do you not see, Dunsford, that, like a cautious official man, he does not want to enter into small details, which have always an air of ridicule? He is not prepared to pledge himself to cricket, golf, football, or prisoner's bars: but in his heart he is manifestly a Young Englander—without the white waistcoat. Nothing would please him better than to see in large letters on one of those advertising vans, "Great match! Victoria Park!! Eleven of Fleet Street against the Eleven of Saffron Hill!!!"

Milverton. Well, there is a great deal in the spirit of

Young England that I like very much, indeed that I respect.

Ellesmere. I should like the Young England party better myself if I were quite sure there was no connection between them and a clan of sour, pity-mongering people, who wash one away with eternal talk about the contrast between riches and poverty; with whom a poor man is always virtuous; and who would, if they could, make him as envious and as discontented as possible.

Milverton. Nothing can be more strikingly in contrast with such thinkers than Young England. Young Englanders, according to the best of their theories, ought to be men of warm sympathy with all classes. There is no doubt of this, that very seldom does any good thing arise, but there comes an ugly phantom of a caricature of it, which sidles up against the reality, mouths its favourite words as a third-rate actor does a great part, under-mimics its wisdom, over-acts its folly, is by half the world taken for it, goes some way to suppress it in its own time, and, perhaps, lives for it in history.

Ellesmere. Well brought out that metaphor, but I don't know that it means more than that the followers of a system do in general a good deal to corrupt it, or that when a great principle is worked into human affairs, a considerable accretion of human folly and falseness mostly grows round it: which things some of us had a suspicion of before.

Dunsford. To go back to the subject. What would you do for country amusements, Milverton? That is what concerns me, you know.

Milverton. Athletic amusements go on naturally here:

do not require so much fostering as in towns. The commons must be carefully kept: I have quite a Cobbettian fear of their being taken away from us under some plausible pretext or other. Well, then, it strikes me that a great deal might be done to promote the more refined pleasures of life amongst our rural population. I hope we shall live to see many of Hullah's pupils playing an important part in this way. Of course, the foundation for these things may best be laid at schools; and is being laid in some places, I am happy to say.

Ellesmere. Humph, music, sing-song!

Milverton. Don't you observe, Dunsford, that when Ellesmere wants to attack us, and does not exactly see how, he mutters to himself sarcastically, sneering himself up, as it were, to the attack.

Ellesmere. You and Dunsford are both wild for music, from barrel-organs upwards.

Milverton. I confess to liking the humblest attempts at melody.

Dunsford. I feel as Sir Thomas Browne tells us he felt, that "even that vulgar and tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion and a profound contemplation of the first composer. There is something in it of divinity more than the ear discovers: it is an hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole world and creatures of God: such a melody to the ear as the whole world well understood, would afford the understanding."

Milverton. Apropos of music in country places, when I was going about last year in the neighbouring county, I saw such a pretty scene at one of the towns. They had

got up a band which played once a week in the evening. It was a beautiful summer evening, and the window of my room at the inn overlooked the open space they had chosen for their performances. There was the great man of the neighbourhood in his carriage, looking as if he came partly on duty, as well as for pleasure. Then there were burly tradesmen, with an air of quiet satisfaction, sauntering about, or leaning against railings. Some were no doubt critical—thought that Will Miller did not play as well as usual this evening. Will's young wife, who had come out to look again at him in his band dress (for the band had a uniform), thought differently. Little boys broke out into imaginary polkas, having some distant reference to the music; not without grace though. The sweep was pre-eminent, as if he would say, "Dirty and sooty as I am, I have a great deal of fun in me. Indeed, what would May-day be but for me?" Studious little boys of the free-school, all green, grasshopper-looking, walked about as boys knowing something of Latin. Here and there went a couple of them in childish loving way, with their arms about each other's necks. Matrons and shy young maidens sat upon the door-steps near. Many a merry laugh filled up the interludes of music. And when evening came softly down upon us, the band finished with "God save the Queen," the little circle of those who would hear the last note moved off, there was a clattering of shutters, a shining of lights through casement-windows, and soon the only sound to be heard was the rough voice of some villager, who would have been too timid to adventure anything by daylight, but now sang boldly out as he went homewards.

Ellesmere. Very pretty, but it sounds to me somewhat fabulous.

Milverton. I assure you——

Ellesmere. Yes, you were tired, had a good dinner, read a speech for or against the corn-laws, fell asleep of course, and had this ingenious dream, which, to this day, you believe to have been a reality. I understand it all.

Milverton. I wish I could have many more such dreams.

CHAPTER V.

OUR last conversation broke off abruptly on the entrance of a visitor; we forgot to name a time for our next meeting: and when I came again, I found Milverton alone in his study. He was reading Count Rumford's essays.

Dunsford. So you are reading Count Rumford. What is it that interests you there?

Milverton. Everything he writes about. He is to me a delightful writer. He throws so much life into all his writings. Whether they are about making the most of food or fuel, or propounding the benefits of bathing, or inveighing against smoke, it is that he went and saw and did and experimented himself, and upon himself. His proceedings at Munich to feed the poor are more interesting than many a novel. It is surprising, too, how far he was before the world in all the things he gave his mind to.

Here Ellesmere entered.

Ellesmere. I heard you were come, Dunsford: I hope we shall have an essay to-day. My critical faculties have

been dormant for some days, and want to be roused a little. Milverton was talking to you about Count Rumford when I came in, was he not? Ah, the Count is a great favourite with Milverton when he is down here; but there is a book upstairs which is Milverton's real favourite just now, a portentous-looking book; some relation to a blue-book, something about sewerage, or health of towns, or public improvements, over which said book our friend here goes into enthusiasms. I am sure if it could be reduced to the size of that tatterdemalion Horace that he carries about, the poor little Horace would be quite supplanted.

Milverton. Now, I must tell you, Dunsford, that Ellesmere himself took up this book he talks about, and it was a long time before he put it down.

Ellesmere. Yes, there is something in real life, even though it is in the unheroic part of it, that interests one. I mean to get through the book.

Dunsford. What are we to have to-day for our essay?

Milverton. Let us adjourn to the garden, and I will read you an essay on Greatness, if I can find it.

We went to our favourite place, and Milverton read us the following essay.

GREATNESS.

YOU cannot substitute any epithet for great, when you are talking of great men. Greatness is not general dexterity carried to any extent; nor

proficiency in any one subject of human endeavour. There are great astronomers, great scholars, great painters, even great poets, who are very far from great men. Greatness can do without success and with it. William is greater in his retreats than Marlborough in his victories. On the other hand, the uniformity of Cæsar's success does not dull his greatness. Greatness is not in the circumstances, but in the man.

What does this greatness then consist in? Not in a nice balance of qualities, purposes, and powers. That will make a happy man, a successful man, a man always in his right depth. Nor does it consist in absence of errors. We need only glance back at any list that can be made of great men, to be convinced of that. Neither does greatness consist in energy, though often accompanied by it. Indeed, it is rather the breadth of the waters than the force of the current that we look to, to fulfil our idea of greatness. There is no doubt that energy acting upon a nature endowed with the qualities that we sum up in the word cleverness, and directed to a few clear purposes, produces a great effect, and may sometimes be mistaken for greatness. If a man is mainly bent upon his own advancement, it cuts many a difficult knot of policy for him, and gives a force and distinctness to his mode of going on which

looks grand. The same happens if he has one pre-eminent idea of any kind, even though it should be a narrow one. Indeed, success in life is mostly gained by unity of purpose; whereas greatness often fails by reason of its having manifold purposes, but it does not cease to be greatness on that account.

If greatness can be shut up in qualities, it will be found to consist in courage and in openness of mind and soul. These qualities may not seem at first to be so potent. But see what growth there is in them. The education of a man of open mind is never ended. Then, with openness of soul, a man sees some way into all other souls that come near him, feels with them, has their experience, is in himself a people. Sympathy is the universal solvent. Nothing is understood without it. The capacity of a man, at least for understanding, may almost be said to vary according to his powers of sympathy. Again, what is there that can counteract selfishness like sympathy? Selfishness may be hedged in by minute watchfulness and self-denial, but it is counteracted by the nature being encouraged to grow out and fix its tendrils upon foreign objects.

The immense defect that want of sympathy is, may be strikingly seen in the failure of the many attempts that have been made in all ages to construct the

Christian character, omitting sympathy. It has produced numbers of people walking up and down one narrow plank of self-restraint, pondering over their own merits and demerits, keeping out, not the world exactly, but their fellow-creatures, from their hearts, and caring only to drive their neighbours before them on this plank of theirs, or to push them headlong. Thus, with many virtues, and much hard work at the formation of character, we have had splendid bigots or censorious small people.

But sympathy is warmth and light too. It is, as it were, the moral atmosphere connecting all animated natures. Putting aside, for a moment, the large differences that opinions, language, and education make between men, look at the innate diversity of character. Natural philosophers were amazed when they thought they had found a newly-created species. But what is each man but a creature such as the world has not before seen? Then think how they pour forth in multitudinous masses, from princes delicately nurtured to little boys on scrubby commons or in dark cellars. How are these people to be understood, to be taught to understand each other, but by those who have the deepest sympathies with all? There cannot be a great man without large sympathy. There may be men who play loud-

sounding parts in life without it, as on the stage, where kings and great people sometimes enter who are only characters of secondary import—deputy great men. But the interest and the instruction lie with those who have to feel and suffer most.

Add courage to this openness we have been considering: and you have a man who can own himself in the wrong, can forgive, can trust, can adventure, can, in short, use all the means that insight and sympathy endow him with.

I see no other essential characteristics in the greatness of nations than there are in the greatness of individuals. Extraneous circumstances largely influence nations as individuals; and make a larger part of the show of the former than of the latter; as we are wont to consider no nation great that is not great in extent or resources, as well as in character. But of two nations, equal in other respects, the superiority must belong to the one which excels in courage and openness of mind and soul.

Again, in estimating the relative merits of different periods of the world, we must employ the same tests of greatness that we use to individuals. To compare, for instance, the present and the past. What

astounds us most in the past is the wonderful intolerance and cruelty; a cruelty constantly turning upon the inventors; an intolerance provoking ruin to the thing it would foster. The most admirable precepts are thrown from time to time upon this cauldron of human affairs, and oftentimes they only seem to make it blaze the higher. We find men devoting the best part of their intellects to the invariable annoyance and persecution of their fellows. You might think that the earth brought forth with more abundant fruitfulness in the past than now, seeing that men found so much time for cruelty, but that you read of famines and privations which these latter days cannot equal. The recorded violent deaths amount to millions. And this is but a small part of the matter. Consider the modes of justice; the use of torture, for instance. What must have been the blinded state of the wise persons (wise for their day) who used torture. Did they ever think themselves, "What should we not say if we were subjected to this?" Many times they must really have desired to get at the truth: and such was their mode of doing it. Now, at the risk of being thought "a laudator" of time present, I would say, here is the element of greatness we have made progress in. We are more open in mind and soul. We have arrived

(some of us at least) at the conclusion that men may honestly differ without offence. We have learned to pity each other more. There is a greatness in modern toleration which our ancestors knew not.

Then comes the other element of greatness, courage. Have we made progress in that? This is a much more dubious question. The subjects of terror vary so much in different times that it is difficult to estimate the different degrees of courage shown in resisting them. Men fear public opinion now as they did in former times the Star Chamber: and those awful goddesses, Appearances, are to us what the Fates were to the Greeks. It is hardly possible to measure the courage of a modern against that of an ancient: but I am unwilling to believe but that enlightenment must strengthen courage.

The application of the tests of greatness, as in the above instance, is a matter of detail and of nice appreciation, as to the results of which men must be expected to differ largely: the tests themselves remain invariable—openness of nature to admit the light of love and reason, and courage to pursue it.

Ellesmere. I agree to your theory, as far as openness of nature is concerned; but I do not much like to put that half-brute thing, courage, so high.

Milverton. Well, you cannot have greatness without it: you may have well-intentioned people and far-seeing people; but if they have no stoutness of heart, they will only be shifty or remonstrant, nothing like great.

Ellesmere. You mean will, not courage. Without will, your open-minded, open-hearted man may be like a great, rudderless vessel driven about by all winds: not a small craft, but a most uncertain one.

Milverton. No. I mean both: both will and courage. Courage is the body to will.

Ellesmere. I believe you are right in that; but do not omit will. It amused me to see how you brought in one of your old notions—that this age is not contemptible. You scribbling people are generally on the other side.

Milverton. You malign us. If I must give any account for my personal predilection for modern times, it consists perhaps in this, that we may now speak our mind. What Tennyson says of his own land,

> "The land where, girt with friend or foe,
> A man may say the thing he will,—"

may be said, in some measure, of the age in which we live. This is an inexpressible comfort. This doubles life. These things surely may be said in favour of the present age, not with a view to puff it up, but so far to encourage ourselves, as we may by seeing that the world does not go on for nothing, that all the misery, blood, and toil that have been spent, were not poured out in vain. Could we have our ancestors again before us, would they

not rejoice at seeing what they had purchased for us: would they think it any compliment to them to extol their times at the expense of the present, and so to intimate that their efforts had led to nothing?

Ellesmere. "I doubt," as Lord Eldon would have said; no, upon second thoughts, I do not doubt. I feel assured that a good many of these said ancestors you are calling up would be much discomforted at finding that all their suffering had led to no sure basis of persecution of the other side.

Dunsford. I wonder, Ellesmere, what you would have done in persecuting times. What escape would your sarcasm have found for itself?

Milverton. Some orthodox way, I daresay. I do not think he would have been particularly fond of martyrdom.

Ellesmere. No. I have no taste for making torches for truth, or being one: I prefer humane darkness to such illumination. At the same time one cannot tell lies: and if one had been questioned about the incomprehensibilities which men in former days were so fierce upon, one must have shown that one disagreed with all parties.

Dunsford. Do not say "one:" *I* should not have disagreed with the great Protestant leaders in the Reformation, for instance

Ellesmere. Hum!

Milverton. If we get aground upon the Reformation, we shall never push off again—else would I say something far from complimentary to those Protestant proceedings which we may rather hope were Tudoresque than Protestant.

Ellesmere. No, that is not fair. The Tudors were a coarse, fierce race; but it will not do to lay the faults of their times upon them only. Look at Elizabeth's ministers. They had about as much notion of religious tolerance as they had of Professor Wheatstone's telegraph. It was not a growth of that age.

Milverton. I do not know. You have Cardinal Pole and the Earl of Essex, both tolerant men in the midst of bigots.

Ellesmere. Well, as you say, Milverton, we shall never push off; if we once get aground on this subject.

Dunsford. I am in fault: so I will take upon myself to bring you quite away from the Reformation. I have been thinking of that comparison in the essay of the present with the past. Such comparisons seem to me very useful, as they best enable us to understand our own times. And, then, when we have ascertained the state and tendency of our own age, we ought to strive to enrich it with those qualities which are complementary to its own. Now with all this toleration, which delights you so much, dear Milverton, is it not an age rather deficient in caring about great matters?

Milverton. If you mean great speculative matters, I might agree with you; but if you mean what I should call the greatest matters, such as charity, humanity, and the like, I should venture to differ with you, Dunsford.

Dunsford. I do not like to see the world indifferent to great speculative matters. I then fear shallowness and earthiness.

Milverton. It is very difficult to say what the world is thinking of now. It is certainly wrong to suppose that

this is a shallow age because it is not driven by one impulse. As civilization advances, it becomes more difficult to estimate what is going on, and we set it all down as confusion. Now there is not one "great antique heart," whose beatings we can count, but many impulses, many circles of thought in which men are moving many objects. Men are not all in the same state of progress, so cannot be moved in masses as of old. At one time chivalry urged all men—then the Church—and the phenomena were few, simple, and broad; or at least they seem so in history.

Ellesmere. Very true: still I agree somewhat with Dunsford, that men are not agitated as they used to be by the great speculative questions. I account for it in this way, that the material world has opened out before us: and we cannot but look at that, and must play with it and work at it. I would say, too, that philosophy had been found out; and there is something in that. Still I think if it were not for the interest now attaching to material things, great intellectual questions, not exactly of the old kind, would arise and agitate the world.

Milverton. There is one thing in my mind that may confirm your view. I cannot but think that the enlarged view we have of the universe must in some measure damp personal ambition. What is it to be King, Sheik, Tetrarch, or Emperor, over a bit of a little bit. Macbeth's speech, "we'd jump the life to come," is a thing a man with modern lights, however madly ambitious, would hardly utter.

Dunsford. Religious lights, Milverton.

Milverton. Of course not, if he had them: but I

meant scientific lights. Sway over our fellow-creatures, at any rate anything but mental sway, has shrunk into less proportions.

Ellesmere. I have been looking over the essay. I think you may put in somewhere—that that age would probably be the greatest in which there was the least difference between great men and the people in general; when the former were only neglected, not hunted down.

Milverton. Yes.

Ellesmere. You are rather lengthy here about the cruelties to be found in history: but we are apt to forget these matters.

Milverton. They always press upon my mind.

Dunsford. And on mine. I do not like to read much of history for that very reason. I get so sick at heart about it all.

Milverton. Ah, yes, history is a stupendous thing. To read it is like looking at the stars; we turn away in awe and perplexity. Yet there is some method running through the little affairs of man as through the multitude of suns, seemingly to us as confused as routed armies in full flight.

Dunsford. Some law of love.

Ellesmere. I am afraid it is not in the past alone that we should be awe-struck with horrors: we, who have a slave trade still on earth. But, to go back to the essay, I like what you say about the theory of constructing the Christian character without geniality; only you do not go far enough. You are afraid. People are for ever talking, especially you philanthropical people, about making others happy. I do not know any way so sure of making others

happy, as of being so oneself, to begin with. I do not mean that people are to be self-absorbed; but they are to drink in nature and life a little. From a genial, wisely-developed man, good things radiate; whereas you must allow, Milverton, that benevolent people are very apt to be one-sided and fussy, and not of the sweetest temper if others will not be good and happy in their way.

Milverton. That is really not fair. Of course, acid, small-minded people, carry their narrow notions and their acidity into their benevolence. Benevolence is no abstract perfection. Men will express their benevolence according to their other gifts or want of gifts. If it is strong, it overcomes other things in the character which would be hindrances to it; but it must speak in the language of the soul it is in.

Ellesmere. Come, let us go and see the pigs. I hear them grunting over their dinners in the farmyard. I like to see creatures who can be happy without a theory.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next time that I came over to Worth-Ashton it was raining, and I found my friends in the study.

"Well, Dunsford," said Ellesmere, "is it not comfortable to have our sessions here for once, and to be looking out on a good solid English wet day?"

Dunsford. Rather a fluid than a solid. But I agree with you in thinking it is very comfortable here.

Ellesmere. I like to look upon the backs of books. First I think how much of the owner's inner life and character is shown in his books; then perhaps I wonder how he got such a book which seems so remote from all that I know of him——

Milverton. I shall turn my books the wrong side upwards when you come into the study.

Ellesmere. But what amuses me most is to see the odd way in which books get together, especially in the library of a man who reads his books and puts them up again wherever there is room. Now here is a charming party: "A Treatise on the Steam-Engine" between "Locke on Christianity" and Madame de Staël's "Corinne." I wonder what they talk about at night when we are all asleep. Here is another happy juxtaposition, old Clarendon next to a modern metaphysician whom he would positively

loathe. Here is Sadler next to Malthus, and Horsley next to Priestley; but this sort of thing happens most in the best-regulated libraries. It is a charming reflection for controversial writers that their works will be put together on the same shelves, often between the same covers, and that, in the minds of educated men, the name of one writer will be sure to recall the name of the other. So they go down to posterity as a brotherhood.

Milverton. To complete Ellesmere's theory, we may say that all those injuries to books which we choose to throw upon some wretched worm, are but the wounds from rival books.

Ellesmere. Certainly. But now let us proceed to polish up the weapons of another of these spiteful creatures.

Dunsford. Yes. What is to be our essay to-day, Milverton?

Milverton. Fiction.

Ellesmere. Now, that is really unfortunate. Fiction is just the subject to be discussed—no, not discussed—talked over, out of doors, on a hot day, all of us lying about in easy attitudes on the grass, Dunsford with his gaiters forming a most picturesque and prominent figure. But there is nothing complete in this life. "Surgit amari aliquid:" and so we must listen to Fiction in arm-chairs.

FICTION.

THE influence of works of fiction is unbounded. Even the minds of well-informed people are often more stored with characters from acknowledged

fiction than from history or biography, or the real life around them. We dispute about these characters as if they were realities. Their experience is our experience: we adopt their feelings, and imitate their acts. And so there comes to be something traditional even in the management of the passions. Shakespeare's historical plays were the only history to the Duke of Marlborough. Thousands of Greeks acted under the influence of what Achilles or Ulysses did, in Homer. The poet sings of the deeds that shall be. He imagines the past: he forms the future.

Yet how surpassingly interesting is real life, when we get an insight into it. Occasionally a great genius lifts up the veil of history, and we see men who once really were alive, who did not always live only in history. Or, amidst the dreary page of battles, levies, sieges, and the sleep-inducing weavings and unweavings of political combination, we come, ourselves, across some spoken or written words of the great actors of the time, and are then fascinated by the life and reality of these things. Could you have the life of any man really portrayed to you, sun-drawn as it were, its hopes, its fears, its revolutions of opinion in each day, its most anxious wishes attained, and then, perhaps, crystallizing into its blackest regrets, such a work would go far to contain all histories, and be the

greatest lesson of love, humility, and tolerance, that men had ever read.

Now fiction does attempt something like the above. In history we are cramped by impertinent facts that must, however, be set down; by theories that must be answered; evidence that must be weighed; views that must be taken. Our facts constantly break off just where we should wish to examine them most closely. The writer of fiction follows his characters into the recesses of their hearts. There are no closed doors for him. His puppets have no secrets from their master. He plagues you with no doubts, no half-views, no criticism. Thus they thought, he tells you; thus they looked, thus they acted. Then, with every opportunity for scenic arrangement (for though his characters are confidential with him, he is only as confidential with his reader as the interest of the story will allow), it is not to be wondered at that the majority of readers should look upon history as a task, but tales of fiction as a delight.

The greatest merit of fiction is the one so ably put forward by Sir James Macintosh: namely, that it creates and nourishes sympathy. It extends this sympathy, too, in directions where, otherwise, we hardly see where it would have come. But it may be objected that this sympathy is indiscriminate; and that

we are in danger of mixing up virtue and vice, and blurring both, if we are led to sympathize with all manner of wrong-doers. But in the first place, virtue and vice are so mixed in real life that it is well to be somewhat prepared for that fact. And moreover the sympathy is not wrongly directed. Who has not felt intense sympathy for Macbeth? Yet could he be alive again, with evil thoughts against "the gracious Duncan;" and could he see into all that has been felt for him, would that be an encouragement to murder? The intense pity of wise people for the crimes of others, when rightly represented, is one of the strongest antidotes against crime. We have taken the extreme case of sympathy being directed towards bad men. How often has fiction made us sympathize with obscure suffering and retiring greatness; with the world-despised, and especially with those mixed characters in whom we might, otherwise, see but one colour—with Shylock and with Hamlet—with Jeanie Deans and with Claverhouse—with Sancho Panza as well as with Don Quixote.

On the other hand, there is a danger of too much converse with fiction leading us into dream-land, or rather into lubber-land. Of course this "too much converse" implies large converse with inferior writers.

Such writers are too apt to make life as they would have it for themselves. Sometimes also they must make it to suit booksellers' rules. Having such power over their puppets they abuse it. They can kill these puppets, change their natures suddenly, reward or punish them so easily, that it is no wonder they are led to play fantastic tricks with them. Now, if a sedulous reader of the works of such writers should form his notions of real life from them, he would occasionally meet with rude shocks when he encountered the realities of that life.

For my own part, notwithstanding all the charms of life in swiftly-written novels, I prefer real life. It is true that, in the former, everything breaks off round, every little event tends to some great thing, everybody one meets is to exercise some great influence for good or ill upon one's fate. I take it for granted one fancies oneself the hero. Then all one's virtue is paid in ready money, or at least one can draw upon it at the end of the third volume. One leaps to remote wealth and honour by hair-breadth chances; and one's uncle in India always dies opportunely. To be sure the thought occurs, that if this novel life could be turned into real life, one might be the uncle in India and not the hero of the tale. But that is a

trifling matter, for at any rate one should carry on with spirit somebody else's story. On the whole, however, as I said before, I prefer real life, where nothing is tied up neatly, but all in odds and ends, where the doctrine of compensation enters largely, where we are often most blamed when we least deserve it, where there is no third volume to make things straight, and where many an Augustus marries many a Belinda, and, instead of being happy ever afterwards, finds that there is a growth of trials and troubles for each successive period of man's life.

In considering the subject of fiction, the responsibility of the writers thereof is a matter worth pointing out. We see clearly enough that historians are to be limited by facts and probabilities; but we are apt to make a large allowance for the fancies of writers of fiction. We must remember, however, that fiction is not falsehood. If a writer puts abstract virtues into book-clothing, and sends them upon stilts into the world, he is a bad writer: if he classifies men, and attributes all virtue to one class and all vice to another, he is a false writer. Then, again, if his ideal is so poor, that he fancies man's welfare to consist in immediate happiness; if he means to paint a great man and paints only a greedy one, he is a mis-

chievous writer: and not the less so, although by lamplight and amongst a juvenile audience, his coarse scene-painting should be thought very grand. He may be true to his own fancy, but he is false to nature. A writer, of course, cannot get beyond his own ideal: but at least he should see that he works up to it: and if it is a poor one, he had better write histories of the utmost concentration of dulness, than amuse us with unjust and untrue imaginings.

Ellesmere. I am glad you have kept to the obvious things about fiction. It would have been a great nuisance to have had to follow you through intricate theories about what fiction consists in, and what are its limits, and so on. Then we should have got into questions touching the laws of representation generally, and then into art, of which, between ourselves, you know very little.

Dunsford. Talking of representation, what do you two, who have now seen something of the world, think about representative government?

Ellesmere. Dunsford plumps down upon us sometimes with awful questions: what do you think of all philosophy? or what is your opinion of life in general? Could not you throw in a few small questions of that kind, together with your representative one, and we might try

to answer them all at once. Dunsford is only laughing at us, Milverton.

Milverton. No, I know what was in Dunsford's mind when he asked that question. He has had his doubts and misgivings, when he has been reading a six nights' debate (for people in the country I daresay do read those things), whether representative government is the most complete device the human mind could suggest for getting at wise rulers.

Ellesmere. It is a doubt which has crossed my mind.

Milverton. And mine; but the doubt, if it has ever been more than mere petulance, has not had much practical weight with me. Look how the business of the world is managed. There are a few people who think out things, and a few who execute. The former are not to be secured by any device. They are gifts. The latter may be well chosen, have often been well chosen, under other forms of government than the representative one. I believe that the favourites of kings have been a superior race of men. Even a fool does not choose a fool for a favourite. He knows better than that: he must have something to lean against. But between the thinkers and the doers (if, indeed, we ought to make such a distinction), *what a number of useful links there are in a representative government* on account of the much larger number of people admitted into some share of government. What general cultivation must come from that, and what security! Of course, everything has its wrong side; and from this number of people let in there comes declamation and claptrap and mob-service, which

is much the same thing as courtiership was in other times. But then, to make the comparison a fair one, you must take the wrong side of any other form of government that has been devised.

Dunsford. Well, but so much power centring in the lower house of Parliament, and the getting into Parliament being a thing which is not very inviting to the kind of people one would most like to see there, do you not think that the ablest men are kept away?

Milverton. Yes; but if you make your governing body a unit or a ten, or any small number, how is this power, unless it is Argus-eyed, and myriad-minded, and right-minded too, to choose the right men any better than they are found now? The great danger, as it appears to me, of representative government, is lest it should slide down from representative government to delegate government. In my opinion, the welfare of England, in great measure, depends upon what takes place at the hustings. If, in the majority of instances, there were abject conduct there, electors and elected would be alike debased; upright public men could not be expected to arise from such beginnings; and thoughtful persons would begin to consider whether some other form of government could not forthwith be made out.

Ellesmere. I have a supreme disgust for the man who at the hustings has no opinion beyond or above the clamour round him. How such a fellow would have kissed the ground before a Pompadour, or waited for hours in a Buckingham's antechamber, only to catch the faintest beam of reflected light from royalty.

But I declare we have been just like schoolboys talking about forms of government and so on.

> "For forms of government let fools contest,
> That which is *worst* administered is best,"—

that is, representative government.

Milverton. I should not like either of you to fancy, from what I have been saying about representative government, that I do not see the dangers and the evils of it. In fact, it is a frequent thought with me of what importance the House of Lords is at present, and of how much greater importance it might be made. If there were Peers for life, and official members of the House of Commons, it would, I think, meet most of your objections, Dunsford.

Dunsford. I suppose I am becoming a little rusty, and disposed to grumble, as I grow old: but there is a good deal in modern government which seems to me very rude and absurd. There comes a clamour, partly reasonable; power is deaf to it, overlooks it, says there is no such thing; then great clamour; after a time, power welcomes that, takes it to its arms, says that now it is loud it is very wise, wishes it had always been clamour itself.

Ellesmere. How many acres do you farm, Dunsford? How spiteful you are!

Dunsford. I am not thinking of Corn Laws alone, as you fancy, Master Ellesmere. But to go to other things. I quite agree, Milverton, with what you were saying just now about the business of the world being carried on by few, and the thinking few being in the nature of gifts to the world, not elicited by King or Kaiser.

Milverton. The mill-streams that turn the clappers of the world arise in solitary places.

Ellesmere. Not a bad metaphor, but untrue. Aristotle, Bacon——

Milverton. Well, I believe it would be much wiser to say, that we cannot lay down rules about the highest work; either when it is done, where it will be done, or how it can be made to be done. It is too immaterial for our measurement; for the highest part even of the mere business of the world is in dealing with ideas. It is very amusing to observe the misconceptions of men on these points. They call for what is outward—can understand that, can praise it. Fussiness and the forms of activity in all ages get great praise. Imagine an active, bustling little prætor under Augustus, how he probably pointed out Horace to his sons as a moony kind of man, whose ways were much to be avoided, and told them it was a weakness in Augustus to like such idle men about him instead of men of business.

Ellesmere. Or fancy a bustling Glasgow merchant of Adam Smith's day watching him. How little would the merchant have dreamt what a number of vessels were to be floated away by the ink in the Professor's inkstand; and what crashing of axes, and clearing of forests in distant lands, the noise of his pen upon the paper portended.

Milverton. It is not only the effect of the still-working man that the busy man cannot anticipate, but neither can he comprehend the present labour. If Horace had told my prætor that

"Abstinuit Venere et vino, sudavit et alsit,"

"What, to write a few lines!" would his prætorship have cried out. "Why, I can live well and enjoy life; and I flatter myself no one in Rome does more business."

Dunsford. All of it only goes to show how little we know of each other, and how tolerant we ought to be of others' efforts.

Milverton. The trials that there must be every day without any incident that even the most minute household chronicler could set down: the labours without show or noise!

Ellesmere. The deep things that there are which, with unthinking people, pass for shallow things, merely because they are clear as well as deep. My fable of the other day, for instance—which, instead of producing any moral effect upon you two, only seemed to make you both inclined to giggle.

Milverton. I am so glad you reminded me of that. I, too, fired with a noble emulation, have invented a fable since we last met which I want you to hear. I assure you I did not mean to laugh at yours; it was only that it came rather unexpectedly upon me. You are not exactly the person from whom one should expect fables.

Dunsford. Now for the fable.

Milverton. There was a gathering together of creatures hurtful and terrible to man, to name their king. Blight, mildew, darkness, mighty waves, fierce winds, Will-o'-the-wisps, and shadows of grim objects, told fearfully their doings and preferred their claims, none prevailing. But when evening came on, a thin mist curled itself up, derisively, amidst the assemblage, and said, "I gather round a man going to his own home over paths

made by his daily footsteps ; and he becomes at once helpless and tame as a child. The lights meant to assist him, then betray. You find him wandering, or need the aid of other Terrors to subdue him. I am, alone, confusion to him." And all the assemblage bowed before the mist, and made it king, and set it on the brow of many a mountain, where, when it is not doing evil, it may be often seen to this day.

Dunsford. Well, I like that fable : only I am not quite clear about the meaning.

Ellesmere. You had no doubt about mine.

Dunsford. Is the mist calumny, Milverton ?

Ellesmere. No, prejudice, I am sure.

Dunsford. Familiarity with the things around us, obscuring knowledge ?

Milverton. I would rather not explain. Each of you make your own fable of it.

Dunsford. Well, if ever I make a fable, it shall be one of the old-fashioned sort, with animals for the speakers, and a good easy moral.

Ellesmere. Not a thing requiring the notes of seven German metaphysicians. I must go and talk a little to my friends, the trees, and see if I can get any explanation from them. It is turning out a beautiful day after all, notwithstanding my praise of its solidity.

CHAPTER VII.

We met as usual at our old spot on the lawn for our next reading. I forget what took place before reading, except that Ellesmere was very jocose about our reading "Fiction" in-doors, and the following "November Essay," as he called it, "under a jovial sun, and with the power of getting up and walking away from each other to any extent."

ON THE ART OF LIVING WITH OTHERS.

THE "Iliad" for war; the "Odyssey" for wandering; but where is the great domestic epic? Yet it is but commonplace to say, that passions may rage round a tea-table, which would not have misbecome men dashing at one another in war-chariots; and evolutions of patience and temper are performed at the fireside, worthy to be compared with the Retreat of the Ten Thousand. Men have worshipped some fantastic being for living alone in

But social martyrdoms place no saints in calendar.

May blind ourselves to it if we like, but the shreds and disgusts that there are behind friendship, relationship, service, and, indeed, proximity of all kinds, is one of the darkest spots upon earth. The various relations of life, which bring people together, cannot, as we know, be perfectly fulfilled except in a state where there will, perhaps, be no occasion for any of them. It is no harm, however, to endeavour to see whether there are any methods which may make these relations in the least degree more harmonious now.

In the first place, if people are to live happily together, they must not fancy, because they are thrown together now, that all their lives have been exactly similar up to the present time, that they started exactly alike, and that they are to be for the future of the same mind. A thorough conviction of the difference of men is the great thing to be assured of in social knowledge: it is to life what Newton's law is to astronomy. Sometimes men have a knowledge of it with regard to the world in general: they do not expect the outer world to agree with them in all points, but are vexed at not being able to drive their

own tastes and opinions into those they live with. Diversities distress them. They will not see that there are many forms of virtue and wisdom. Yet we might as well say, "Why all these stars; why this difference; why not all one star?"

Many of the rules for people living together in peace follow from the above. For instance, not to interfere unreasonably with others, not to ridicule their tastes, not to question and re-question their resolves, not to indulge in perpetual comment on their proceedings, and to delight in their having other pursuits than ours, are all based upon a thorough perception of the simple fact that they are not we.

Another rule for living happily with others is to avoid having stock subjects of disputation. It mostly happens, when people live much together, that they come to have certain set topics, around which, from frequent dispute, there is such a growth of angry words, mortified vanity, and the like, that the original subject of difference becomes a standing subject for quarrel; and there is a tendency in all minor disputes to drift down to it.

Again, if people wish to live well together, they must not hold too much to logic, and suppose that everything is to be settled by sufficient reason.

Dr. Johnson saw this clearly with regard to married people, when he said, "Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason every morning all the minute detail of a domestic day." But the application should be much more general than he made it. There is no time for such reasonings, and nothing that is worth them. And when we recollect how two lawyers, or two politicians, can go on contending, and that there is no end of one-sided reasoning on any subject, we shall not be sure that such contention is the best mode for arriving at truth. But certainly it is not the way to arrive at good temper.

If you would be loved as a companion, avoid unnecessary criticism upon those with whom you live. The number of people who have taken out judges' patents for themselves is very large in any society. Now it would be hard for a man to live with another who was always criticising his actions, even if it were kindly and just criticism. It would be like living between the glasses of a microscope. But these self-elected judges, like their prototypes, are very apt to have the persons they judge brought before them in the guise of culprits.

One of the most provoking forms of the criticism above alluded to is that which may be called

criticism over the shoulder. "Had I been consulted," "Had you listened to me," "But you always will," and such short scraps of sentences may remind many of us of dissertations which we have suffered and inflicted, and of which we cannot call to mind any soothing effect.

Another rule is, not to let familiarity swallow up all courtesy. Many of us have a habit of saying to those with whom we live such things as we say about strangers behind their backs. There is no place, however, where real politeness is of more value than where we mostly think it would be superfluous. You may say more truth, or rather speak out more plainly, to your associates, but not less courteously, than you do to strangers.

Again, we must not expect more from the society of our friends and companions than it can give; and especially must not expect contrary things. It is somewhat arrogant to talk of travelling over other minds (mind being, for what we know, infinite): but still we become familiar with the upper views, tastes, and tempers of our associates. And it is hardly in man to estimate justly what is familiar to him. In travelling along at night, as Hazlitt says, we catch a glimpse into cheerful-looking rooms with light blazing in them, and we conclude, involuntarily,

how happy the inmates must be. Yet there is heaven and hell in those rooms, the same heaven and hell that we have known in others.

There are two great classes of promoters of social happiness, cheerful people, and people who have some reticence. The latter are more secure benefits to society even than the former. They are non-conductors of all the heats and animosities around them. To have peace in a house, or a family, or any social circle, the members of it must beware of passing on hasty and uncharitable speeches, which, the whole of the context seldom being told, is often not conveying but creating mischief. They must be very good people to avoid doing this; for let human nature say what it will, it likes sometimes to look on at a quarrel: and that, not altogether from ill-nature, but from a love of excitement—for the same reason that Charles II. liked to attend the debates in the Lords, because they were "as good as a play."

We come now to the consideration of temper, which might have been expected to be treated first. But to cut off the means and causes of bad temper is, perhaps, of as much importance as any direct dealing with the temper itself. Besides, it is probable

that in small social circles there is more suffering from unkindness than ill-temper. Anger is a thing that those who live under us suffer more from than those who live with us. But all the forms of ill-humour and sour-sensitiveness, which especially belong to equal intimacy (though indeed they are common to all), are best to be met by impassiveness. When two sensitive persons are shut up together, they go on vexing each other with a reproductive irritability.* But sensitive and hard people get on well together. The supply of temper is not altogether out of the usual laws of supply and demand.

Intimate friends and relations should be careful when they go out into the world together, or admit

* Madame Necker de Saussure's maxim about firmness with children has suggested the above. "Ce qui plie ne peut servir d'appui, et l'enfant veut être appuyé. Non-seulement il en a besoin, mais il le désire, mais sa tendresse la plus constante n'est qu'à ce prix. Si vous lui faites l'effet d'un autre enfant, si vous partagez ses passions, ses vacillations continuelles, si vous lui rendez tous ses mouvements en les augmentant, soit par la contrariété, soit par un excès de complaisance, il pourra se servir de vous comme d'un jouet, mais non être heureux en votre présence ; il pleurera, se mutinera, et bientôt le souvenir d'un temps de désordre et d'humeur se liera avec votre idée. Vous n'avez pas été le soutien de votre enfant, vous ne l'avez pas préservé de cette fluctuation perpétuelle de la volonté, maladie des êtres faibles et livrés á une imagination vive ; vous n'avez assuré ni sa paix, ni sa sagesse, ni son bonheur, pourquoi vous croirait-il sa mère?" *L'Education Progressive*, vol. i. p. 228.

others to their own circle, that they do not make a bad use of the knowledge which they have gained of each other by their intimacy. Nothing is more common than this, and did it not mostly proceed from mere carelessness, it would be superlatively ungenerous. You seldom need wait for the written life of a man to hear about his weaknesses, or what are supposed to be such, if you know his intimate friends or meet him in company with them.

Lastly, in conciliating those we live with, it is most surely done, not by consulting their interests, nor by giving way to their opinions, so much as by not offending their tastes. The most refined part of us lies in this region of taste, which is perhaps a result of our whole being rather than a part of our nature, and at any rate is the region of our most subtle sympathies and antipathies.

It may be said that if the great principles of Christianity were attended to, all such rules, suggestions, and observations as the above would be needless. True enough! Great principles are at the bottom of all things; but to apply them to daily life, many little rules, precautions, and insights are needed. Such things hold a middle place between real life and

principles, as form does between matter and spirit: moulding the one and expressing the other.

Ellesmere. Quite right that last part. Everybody must have known really good people, with all Christian temper, but having so little Christian prudence as to do a great deal of mischief in society.

Dunsford. There is one case, my dear Milverton, which I do not think you have considered: the case where people live unhappily together, not from any bad relations between each other, but because they do not agree about the treatment of others. A just person, for instance, who would bear anything for himself or herself, must remonstrate, at the hazard of any disagreement, at injustice to others.

Milverton. Yes. That, however, is a case to be decided upon higher considerations than those I have been treating of. A man must do his duty in the way of preventing injustice, and take what comes of it.

Ellesmere. For people to live happily together, the real secret is, that they should not live too much together. Of course, you cannot say that: it would sound harsh, and cut short the essay altogether.

Again, you talk about tastes and "region of subtle sympathies," and all that. I have observed that if people's vanity is pleased, they live well enough together. Offended vanity is the great separator. You hear a man (call

him B) saying that he is really not himself before So-and-so : tell him that So-and-so admires him very much and is himself rather abashed before B, and B is straightway comfortable, and they get on harmoniously together, and you hear no more about subtle sympathies or antipathies.

Dunsford. What a low view you do take of things sometimes, Ellesmere.

Milverton. I should not care how low it was ; but it is not fair ; at least it does not contain the whole matter. In the very case he has put, there was a subtle embarrassment between B and So-and-so. Well, now, let these people, not merely meet occasionally, but be obliged to live together, without any such explanation as Ellesmere has imagined ; and they will be very uncomfortable from causes that you cannot impute to vanity. It takes away much of the savour of life to live amongst those with whom one has not anything like one's fair value. It may not be mortified vanity, but unsatisfied sympathy, which causes this discomfort. B thinks that the other does not know him ; he feels that he has no place with the other. When there is intense admiration on one side, there is hardly a care in the mind of the admiring one as to what estimation he is held in. But in ordinary cases, some clearly defined respect and acknowledgment of worth is needed on both sides. See how happy a man is in any office or service who is acknowledged to do something well. How comfortable he is with his superiors ! He has his place. It is not exactly a satisfaction of his vanity, but an acknowledgment of his useful existence that contents him. I do not

mean to say that there are not innumerable claims for acknowledgment of merit and service made by rampant vanity and egotism, which claims cannot be satisfied, ought not to be satisfied, and which, being unsatisfied, embitter people. But I think your word Vanity will not explain all the feelings we have been talking about.

Ellesmere. Perhaps not.

Dunsford. Certainly not.

Ellesmere. Well, at any rate, you will admit that there is a class of dreadfully humble people who make immense claims at the very time that they are explaining that they have no claims. They say they know they cannot be esteemed : they are well aware that they are not wanted, and so on ; all the while making it a sort of grievance and a claim that they are not what they know themselves not to be : whereas, if they did but fall back upon their humility, and keep themselves quiet about their demerits, they would be strong then, and in their place and happy, doing what they could.

Milverton. It must be confessed that these people do make their humility somewhat obnoxious. Yet, after all, you allow that they know their deficiencies, and they only say, "I know I have not much to recommend me, but I wish to be loved, nevertheless."

Ellesmere. Ah, if they only said it a few times! Besides, there is a little envy mixed up with the humility that I mean.

Dunsford. Travelling is a great trial of people's ability to live together.

Ellesmere. Yes. Lavater says that you do not know

a man until you have divided an inheritance with him; but I think a long journey with him will do.

Milverton. Well, and what is it in travelling that makes people disagree? Not direct selfishness, but injudicious management; stupid regrets, for instance, at things not being different from what they are, or from what they might have been, if "the other route" had been chosen; fellow-travellers punishing each other with each other's tastes; getting stock subjects of disputation; laughing unseasonably at each other's vexations and discomforts; and endeavouring to settle everything by the force of sufficient reason, instead of by some authorized will, or by tossing up. Thus, in the short time of a journey, almost all modes and causes of human disagreement are brought into action.

Ellesmere. My favourite one not being the least—overmuch of each other's company.

For my part, I think one of the greatest bores of companionship is, not merely that people wish to fit tastes and notions on you just as they might the first pair of ready-made shoes they meet with, a process amusing enough to the bystander, but exquisitely uncomfortable to the person being ready-shod: but that they bore you with never-ending talk about their pursuits, even when they know that you do not work in the same groove with them, and that they cannot hope to make you do so.

Dunsford. Nobody can accuse you of that fault, Ellesmere: I never heard you dilate much upon anything that interested you, though I have known you have some pet subject, and to be working at it for months. But this comes of your coldness of nature.

Ellesmere. Well, it might bear a more favourable construction. But to go back to the essay. It only contemplates the fact of people living together as equals, if we may so say; but in general, of course, you must add some other relationship or connection than that of merely being together.

Milverton. I had not overlooked that; but there are certain general rules in the matter that may be applied to nearly all relationship, just as I have taken that one from Johnson, applied by him to married life, about not endeavouring to settle all things by reasoning, and have given it a general application which, I believe, it will bear.

Ellesmere. There is one thing that I should think must often make women very unreasonable and unpleasant companions. Oh, you may both hold up your hands and eyes, but I am not married, and can say what I please. Of course you put on the proper official look of astonishment; and I will duly report it. But I was going to say that Chivalry, which has doubtless done a great deal of good, has also done a great deal of harm. Women may talk the greatest unreason out of doors, and nobody kindly informs them that it is unreason. They do not talk much before clever men, and when they do, their words are humoured and dandled as children's sayings are. Now, I should fancy—mind I do not want either of you to say that my fancy is otherwise than quite unreasonable—I should fancy that when women have to hear reason at home it must sound odd to them. The truth is, you know, we cannot pet anything much without doing it mischief. You cannot pet the intellect, any more than

the will, without injuring it. Well then, again, if you put people upon a pedestal and do a great deal of worship around them, I cannot think but the will in such cases must become rather corrupted, and that lessons of obedience must fall rather harshly——

Dunsford. Why, you Mahometan, you Turk of a lawyer—would you do away with all the high things of courtesy, tenderness for the weaker, and——

Milverton. No, I see what he means, and there is something in it. Many a woman is brought up in unreason and self-will from these causes that he has given, as many a man from other causes; but there is one great corrective that he has omitted, and which is, that all forms, fashions, and outward things have a tendency to go down before realities when they come hand to hand together. Knowledge and judgment prevail. Governing is apt to fall to the right person in private as in public affairs.

Ellesmere. Those who give way in public affairs, and let the men who can do a thing do it, are so far wise that they know what is to be done, mostly. But the very things I am arguing against are the unreason and self-will, which being constantly pampered, do not appreciate reason or just sway. Besides, is there not a force in ill-humour and unreason to which you constantly see the wisest bend? You will come round to my opinion some day. I do not want, though, to convince you. It is no business of mine.

Milverton. Well, I may be wrong, but I think, when we come to consider Education, I can show you how the dangers you fear may be greatly obviated, without

Chivalry being obliged to put on a wig and gown, and be wise.

Dunsford. Meanwhile, let us enjoy the delightful atmosphere of courtesy,, unreasonable sometimes, if you like, which saves many people being put down with the best arguments in the most convincing manner, or being weighed, estimated, and given way to, so as not to spoil them.

Ellesmere. Do not tell, either of you, what I have been saying. I shall always be poked up into some garret when I come to see you, if you do.

Dunsford. I think the most curious thing, as regards people living together, is the intense ignorance they sometimes are in of each other. Many years ago, one or other of you said something of this kind to me, and I have often thought of it since.

Milverton. People fulfil a relation towards each other, and they only know each other in that relation, especially if it is badly managed by the superior one; but any way the relationship involves some ignorance. They perform orbits round each other, each gyrating, too, upon his own axis, and there are parts of the character of each which are never brought into view of the other.

Ellesmere. I should carry this notion of yours, Milverton, further than you do. There is a peculiar mental relation soon constituted between associates of any kind, which confines and prevents complete knowledge on both sides. Each man, in some measure, therefore, knows others only through himself. Tennyson makes Ulysses say,

"I am a part of all that I have seen:"

it might have run,

"I am a part of all that I have heard."

Dunsford. Ellesmere becoming metaphysical and transcendental!

Ellesmere. Well, well, we will leave these heights, and descend in little drops of criticism. There are two or three things you might have pointed out, Milverton. Perhaps you would say that they are included in what you have said, but I think not. You talk of the mischief of much comment on each other amongst those who live together. You might have shown, I think, that in the case of near friends and relations, this comment almost deepens into interference—at least it partakes of that nature. Friends and relations should, therefore, be especially careful to avoid needless comments on each other. They do just the contrary. That is one of the reasons why they often hate one another so much.

Dunsford. Ellesmere!

Ellesmere. Protest, if you like, my dear Dunsford.

Dissentient,

1. Because I wish it were not so.
2. Because I am sorry that it is.

(Signed) DUNSFORD.

Milverton. "Hate" is too strong a word, Ellesmere; what you say would be true enough, if you would put "are not in sympathy with."

Ellesmere. "Have a quiet distaste for." That is the proper medium. Now, to go to another matter. You have not put the case of over-managing people, who are tremendous to live with.

Milverton. I have spoken about "interfering unreasonably with others."

Ellesmere. That does not quite convey what I mean. It is when the manager and the managee are both of the same mind as to the thing to be done; but the former insists, and instructs, and suggests, and foresees, till the other feels that all free agency for him is gone.

Milverton. It is a sad thing to consider how much of their abilities people turn to tiresomeness. You see a man who would be very agreeable if he were not so observant: another who would be charming, if he were deaf and dumb: a third delightful, if he did not vex all around him with superfluous criticism.

Ellesmere. A hit at me that last, I suspect. But I shall go on. You have not, I think, made enough merit of independence in companionship. If I were to put into an aphorism what I mean, I should say, Those who depend wholly on companionship are the worst companions; or thus: Those deserve companionship who can do without it. There Mr. Aphoriser General, what do you say to that?

Milverton. Very good, but——

Ellesmere. Of course a "but" to other people's aphorisms, as if every aphorism had not buts innumerable. We critics, you know, cannot abide criticism. We do all the criticism that is needed ourselves. I wonder at the presumption sometimes of you wretched authors. But to proceed. You have not said anything about the mischief of superfluous condolence amongst people who live together. I flatter myself that I could condole anybody out of all peace of mind.

Milverton. All depends upon whether condolence goes with the grain, or against the grain, of vanity. I know what you mean, however: For instance, it is a very absurd thing to fret much over other people's courses, not considering the knowledge and discipline that there is in any course that a man may take. And it is still more absurd to be constantly showing the people fretted over that you are fretting over them. I think a good deal of what you call superfluous condolence would come under the head of superfluous criticism.

Ellesmere. Not altogether. In companionship, when an evil happens to one of the circle, the others should simply attempt to share and lighten it, not to expound it, or dilate on it, or make it the least darker. The person afflicted generally apprehends all the blackness sufficiently. Now, unjust abuse by the world is to me like the howling of the wind at night when one is warm within. Bring any draught of it into one's house though, and it is not so pleasant.

Dunsford. Talking of companionship, do not you think there is often a peculiar feeling of home where age or infirmity is? The arm-chair of the sick or the old is the centre of the house. They think, perhaps, that they are unimportant; but all the household hopes and cares flow to them and from them.

Milverton. I quite agree with you. What you have just depicted is a beautiful sight, especially when, as you often see, the age or infirmity is not in the least selfish or exacting.

Ellesmere. We have said a great deal about the companionship of human beings: but, upon my word, we

ought to have kept a few words for our dog friends. Rollo has been lolling out his great tongue, and looking wistfully from face to face, as we each began our talk. A few minutes ago he was quite concerned, thinking I was angry with you, when I would not let you "but" my aphorism. I am not sure which of the three I should rather go out walking with now: Dunsford, Rollo, Milverton. The middle one is the safest companion. I am sure not to get out of humour with him. But I have no objection to try the whole three: only I vote for much continuity of silence, as we have had floods of discussion to-day.

Dunsford. Agreed!

Ellesmere. Come, Rollo, you may bark now, as you have been silent, like a wise dog, all the morning.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was arranged, during our walk, that Ellesmere should come and stay a day or two with me, and see the neighbouring cathedral, which is nearer my house than Milverton's. The visit over, I brought him back to Worth-Ashton. Milverton saw us coming, walked down the hill to meet us, and after the usual greetings, began to talk to Ellesmere.

Milverton. So you have been to see our cathedral. I say "our," for when a cathedral is within ten miles of us, we feel a property in it, and are ready to battle for its architectural merits.

Ellesmere. You know I am not a man to rave about cathedrals.

Milverton. I certainly do not expect you to do so. To me a cathedral is mostly somewhat of a sad sight. You have Grecian monuments, if anything so misplaced can be called Grecian, imbedded against and cutting into Gothic pillars; the doors shut for the greater part of the day; only a little bit of the building used; beadledom predominant; the clink of money here and there; white-wash in vigour; the singing indifferent; the sermons not

indifferent but bad; and some visitors from London forming, perhaps, the most important part of the audience; in fact, the thing having become a show. We look about, thinking when piety filled every corner, and feel that the cathedral is too big for the Religion which is a dried-up thing that rattles in this empty space.

Ellesmere. This is the boldest simile I have heard a long time. My theory about cathedrals is very different, I must confess.

Dunsford. Theory!

Ellesmere. Well, "theory" is not the word I ought to have used—feeling then. My feeling is, how strong this creature was, this worship, how beautiful, how alluring, how complete; but there was something stronger—truth.

Milverton. And more beautiful?

Ellesmere. Yes, and far more beautiful.

Milverton. Doubtless, to the free spirits who brought truth forward.

Ellesmere. You are only saying this, Milverton, to try what I will say: but despite of all sentimentalities, you sympathize with any emancipation of the human mind, as I do, however much the meagreness of Protestantism may be at times distasteful to you.

Milverton. I did not say I was anxious to go back. Certainly not. But what says Dunsford? Let us sit down on this stile and hear what he has to say.

Dunsford. I cannot talk with you about this subject. If I tell you of all the merits (as they seem to me) of the Church of England, you will both pick what I say to pieces, whereas if I leave you to fight on, one or the other

will avail himself of those arguments on which our Church is based.

Milverton. Well, Dunsford, you are very candid, and would make a complete diplomatist: truth-telling being now pronounced (rather late in the day) the very acmé of diplomacy. But do you not own that our cathedrals are sadly misused?

Dunsford. Now, very likely, if more were made of them, you, and men who think like you, would begin to cry out "superstition;" and would instantly turn round and inveigh against the uses which you now, perhaps, imagine for cathedrals.

Milverton. Well, one never can answer for one's self; but at any rate, I do not see what is the meaning of building new churches in neighbourhoods where there are already the noblest buildings suitable for the same purposes. Is there a church religion, and is there a cathedral religion?

Ellesmere. You cannot make the present fill the garb of the past, Milverton, any more than you could make the past fill that of the present. Now, as regards the very thing you are about to discuss to-day, if it be the same you told us in our last walk—education: if you are only going to give us some institution for it, I daresay it may be very good for to-day, or for this generation, but it will have its sere and yellow leaf, and there will be a time when future Milvertons, in sentimental mood, will moan over it, and wish they had it and all that has grown up to take its place at the same time. But all this is what I have often heard you say yourself in other words.

Dunsford. This is very hard doctrine, and not quite

sound, I think. In getting the new gain, we always sacrifice something, and we should look with some pious regard to what was good in the things which are past. That good is generally one which, though it may not be equal to the present, would make a most valuable supplement to it.

Milverton. I would try and work in the old good thing with the new, not as patchwork though, but making the new thing grow out in such a way as to embrace the old advantage.

Ellesmere. Well, we must have the essay before we branch out into our philosophy. Pleasure afterwards—I will not say what comes first.

EDUCATION.

THE word education is so large, that one may almost as well put "world," or "the end and object of being," at the head of an essay. It should, therefore, soon be declared what such a heading does mean. The word education suggests chiefly to some minds what the State can do for those whom they consider its young people—the children of the poorer classes: to others, it presents the idea of all the training that can be got for money at schools and colleges, and which can be fairly accomplished and shut in at the age of one-and-twenty. This essay, however, will not be a treatise on government educa-

tion, or other school and college education, but will only contain a few points in reference to the general subject, which may escape more methodical and enlarged discussions.

In the first place, as regards government education, it must be kept in mind that there is a danger of its being too interfering and formal, of its overlying private enterprise, insisting upon too much uniformity, and injuring local connections and regards. Education, even in the poorest acceptance of the word, is a great thing: but the harmonious intercourse of different ranks, if not a greater, is a more difficult one; and we must not gain the former at any considerable sacrifice of the latter.

There is another point connected with this branch of the subject which requires, perhaps, to be noted. If government provision is made in any case, might it not be combined with private payment in other cases, or enter in the way of rewards, so as to do good throughout each step of the social ladder? The lowest kind of school education is a power, and it is desirable that the gradations of this power should correspond to other influences which we know to be good. For instance, a hard-working man saves something to educate his children; if he can get a little better education for

them than other parents of his own rank for theirs, it is an incentive and a reward to him, and the child's bringing up at home is a thing which will correspond to this better education at school. In this there are the elements at once of stability and progress.

These views may possibly seem too refined, but at any rate they require consideration.

The next branch of the subject is the ordinary education of young persons not of the poorest classes, with which the State has hitherto had little or nothing to do. This may be considered under four heads: religious, moral, intellectual, and physical education. With regard to the first, there is not much that can be put into rules about it. Parents and tutors will naturally be anxious to impress those under their charge with the religious opinions which they themselves hold. In doing this, however, they should not omit to lay a foundation for charity towards people of other religious opinions. For this purpose, it may be requisite to give a child a notion that there are other creeds besides that in which it is brought up itself. And especially, let it not suppose that all good and wise people are of its church or chapel. However desirable it may appear to the person teaching that there should be such a thing as unity of religion, yet as the facts of

the world are against his wishes, and as this is the world which the child is to enter, it is well that the child should in reasonable time be informed of these facts. It may be said in reply that history sufficiently informs children on these points. But the world of the young is the domestic circle; all beyond is fabulous, unless brought home to them by comment. The fact, therefore, of different opinions in religious matters being held by good people should sometimes be dwelt upon, instead of being shunned, if we would secure a groundwork of tolerance in a child's mind.

INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION.

In the intellectual part of education, there is the absolute knowledge to be acquired, and the ways of acquiring knowledge to be gained. The latter of course form the most important branch. They can, in some measure, be taught. Give children little to do, make much of its being accurately done. This will give accuracy. Insist upon speed in learning, with careful reference to the original powers of the pupil. This speed gives the habit of concentrating attention, one of the most valuable of mental habits. Then cultivate logic. Logic is not the hard matter that is fancied. A young person, especially after a

little geometrical training, may soon be taught to perceive where a fallacy exists, and whether an argument is well sustained. It is not, however, sufficient for him to be able to examine sharply and to pull to pieces. He must learn how to build. This is done by method. The higher branches of method cannot be taught at first. But you may begin by teaching orderliness of mind. Collecting, classifying, contrasting and weighing facts are some of the processes by which method is taught. When these four things, accuracy, attention, logic, and method are attained, the intellect is fairly furnished with its instruments.

As regards the things to be taught, they will vary to some extent in each age. The general course of education pursued at any particular time may not be the wisest by any means, and greatness will overleap it and neglect it, but the mass of men may go more safely and comfortably, if not with the stream, at least by the side of it.

In the choice of studies, too much deference should not be paid to the bent of a young person's mind. Excellence in one or two things which may have taken the fancy of a youth (or which really may suit his genius) will ill compensate for a complete ignorance of those branches of study which are very repugnant to him; and which are, therefore, not likely to

be learnt when he has freedom in the choice of his studies.

Amongst the first things to be aimed at in the intellectual part of education is variety of pursuit. A human being, like a tree, if it is to attain to perfect symmetry, must have light and air given to it from all quarters. This may be done without making men superficial. Scientific method may be acquired without many sciences being learnt. But one or two great branches of science must be accurately known. So, too, the choice works of antiquity may be thoroughly appreciated without extensive reading. And passing on from mere learning of any kind, a variety of pursuits, even in what may be called accomplishments, is eminently serviceable. Much may be said of the advantage of keeping a man to few pursuits, and of the great things done thereby in the making of pins and needles. But in this matter we are not thinking of the things that are to be done, but of the persons who are to do them. Not wealth but men. A number of one-sided men may make a great nation, though I much incline to doubt that; but such a nation will not contain a number of great men.

The very advantage that flows from division of labour, and the probable consequences that men's future bread-getting pursuits will be more and more

subdivided, and therefore limited, make it the more necessary that a man should begin life with a broad basis of interest in many things which may cultivate his faculties and develop his nature. This multifariousness of pursuit is needed also in the education of the poor. Civilization has made it easy for a man to brutalize himself: how is this to be counteracted but by endowing him with many pursuits which may distract him from vice? It is not that kind of education which leads to no employment in after-life, that will do battle with vice. But when education enlarges the field of life-long good pursuits, it becomes formidable to the soul's worst enemies.

MORAL EDUCATION.

In considering moral education, we must recollect that there are three agents in this matter—the child himself, the influence of his grown-up friends, and that of his contemporaries. All that his grown-up friends tell him in the way of experience goes for very little, except in palpable matters. They talk of abstractions which he cannot comprehend: and the "Arabian Nights" is a truer world to him than that they talk of. Still, though they cannot furnish experience, they can give motives. Indeed, in their

daily intercourse with the child they are always doing so. For instance, truth, courage, and kindness are the great moral qualities to be instilled. Take courage, in its highest form—moral courage. If a child perpetually hears such phrases (and especially if they are applied to his own conduct), as "What people will say," "How they will look at you," "What they will think," and the like, it tends to destroy all just self-reliance in that child's mind, and to set up instead an exaggerated notion of public opinion, the greatest tyrant of these times. People can see this in such an obvious thing as animal courage. They will avoid over-cautioning children against physical dangers, knowing that the danger they talk much about will become a bugbear to the child which it may never get rid of. But a similar peril lurks in the application of moral motives. Truth, courage, and kindness are likely to be learnt, or not, by children, according as they hear and receive encouragement in the direction of these pre-eminent qualities. When attempt is made to frighten a child with these worldly maxims, "What will be said of you?" "Are you like such a one?" and such things, it is meant to draw him under the rule of grown-up respectability. The last thing thought of by the parent or teacher is, that such maxims will bring the child under the especial guid-

ance of the most unscrupulous of his contemporaries. They will use ridicule and appeal to their little world, which will be his world, and ask, "What will be said" of him. There should be some stuff in him of his own to meet these awful generalities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

The physical education of children is a very simple matter, too simple to be much attended to without great perseverance and resolution on the part of those who care for the children. It consists, as we all know, in good air, simple diet, sufficient exercise, and judicious clothing. The first requisite is the most important, and by far the most frequently neglected. This neglect is not so unreasonable as it seems. It arises from pure ignorance. If the mass of mankind knew what scientific men know about the functions of the air, they would be as careful in getting a good supply of it as of their other food. All the people that ever were supposed to die of poison in the middle ages, and that means nearly everybody whose death was worth speculating about, are not so many as those who die poisoned by bad air in the course of any given year. Even a slightly noxious thing, which is constant, affecting us every moment of the day,

must have a considerable influence: but the air we breathe is not a thing that slightly affects us, but one of the most important elements of life. Moreover, children are the most affected by impurity of air. We need not weary ourselves with much statistics to ascertain this. One or two broad facts will assure us of it. In Nottingham there is a district called Byron Ward, "the densest and worst-conditioned quarter of the town." A table has been made by Mr. William Hawksley of the mortality of equal populations in different parts of the town:

"On comparing the diagram, No. 1, relating to Park Ward, with the diagram No. 7, relating to Byron Ward, it will be seen that the heavier pressure of the causes of mortality occasions in the latter district such an undue destruction of early life, that towards 100 deaths, however occurring, Byron Ward contributes fifty per cent. more of children under five years of age than the Park Ward, for the former sends sixty children to an early grave, while the latter sends only forty." *

Mr. Hawksley, the former witness alluded to, goes on to say—

"It has been long known that, with increase of years, up to that period of life which has been denominated the

* See *Health of Towns Report*, vol. i. p. 336. A similar result may be deduced from a similar table made by the Rev. J. Clay of Preston. See the same Report and vol. p. 175.

second childhood, the human constitution becomes gradually more resistful, and as it were slowly hardened against the repeated attacks of those more acute disorders incident to an inferior degree of sanitary civilization, by which large portions of an infant population are continually overcome and rapidly swept away. From the operation of these and more extraneous influences of a disturbing character, an infant population is almost entirely exempted; and on this account it is considered that an infant population constitutes as it were a delicate barometer, from which we may derive more early and more certain indications of the presence and comparative force of *local* causes of mortality and disease than can be obtained from the more general methods of investigation usually pursued."

The above evidence is confirmed by Mr. Toynbee:—

"The disease of hydrocephalus, or water in the brain, so fatal to children, I find associated with symptoms of scrofula, and arising in abundance in these close rooms. I believe water in the brain, in the class of patients whom I visit, to be almost wholly a scrofulous affection." *

But supposing people aware of the necessity for good air, and therefore for ventilation, what is to be done? In houses in great towns certainly, and I should say in all houses, some of the care and expense that are devoted to ornamental work, which when done is often a care, a trouble, an eyesore, and

* See *Health of Towns Report*, vol. i. p. 75.

a mischief, should be given to modes of ventilation,* sound building, abundant excess of light, largeness of sleeping-rooms, and such useful things. Less ormolu and tinsel of all kinds in the drawing-rooms, and sweeter air in the regions above. Similar things may be done for and by the poor.† And it need hardly be said that those people who care for their children, if of any enlightenment at all, will care greatly for the sanitary condition of their neighbourhood generally. At present you will find at many a rich man's door ‡ a nuisance which is poisoning the atmosphere that his children are to breathe, but which he could entirely cure for less than one day's ordinary expenses.

I am afraid that ventilation is very little attended to in school-rooms, either for rich or poor. Now it may be deliberately said that there is very little learned in any school-room that can compensate for the mischief of its being learned in the midst of impure air. This

* See Dr. Arnott's letter, *Claims of Labour*, p. 282.

† By zinc ventilators, for instance, in the windows and openings into the flues at the top of the rooms. See *Health of Towns Report*, 1844, vol. i. pp. 76, 77. Mr. Coulhart's evidence.—*Ibid.*, pp. 307, 308.

‡ There are several thousand gratings to sewers and drains which are utterly useless on account of their position, and positively injurious from their emanations.—Mr. Guthrie's evidence.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 255.

is a thing which parents must look to; for the grown-up people in the school-rooms, though suffering grievously themselves from insufficient ventilation, will be unobservant of it.* In every system of government inspection, ventilation must occupy a prominent part.

The advantage of simple food for children is a thing that people have found out. And as regards exercise, children happily make great efforts to provide a sufficiency of this for themselves. In clothing, the folly and conformity of grown-up people enter again. Loving mothers, in various parts of the world, carry about at present, I believe, and certainly in times past carried, their little children strapped to a board, with nearly as little power of motion as the board itself. Could we get the returns of stunted miserable beings, or of deaths, from this cause, they would be something portentous. Less in degree, but not less fatally absurd in principle, are many of the strappings, bandages, and incipient stays for children amongst us. They are all mischievous. Allow children, at

* Mr. Wood states that the masters and mistresses were generally ignorant of the depressing and unhealthy effects of the atmosphere which surrounded them, and he mentions the case of the mistress of a dame-school who replied, when he pointed out this to her, that "the children thrived best in dirt!"—*Health of Towns Report*, vol. i. pp. 146, 147.

any rate, some freedom of limbs, some opportunity of being graceful and healthy. Give Nature—dear motherly, much-abused Nature—some chance of forming these little ones according to the beneficent intentions of Providence, and not according to the angular designs of ill-educated men and women.

I do not say that attention to the above matters of good air, judicious clothing, and freedom from bandages, will absolutely secure health, because these very things may have been so ill attended to in the parents or in the parental stock as to have introduced special maladies; but at least they are the most important objects to be minded now; and, perhaps, the more to be minded in the children of those who have suffered most from neglect in these particulars.

When we are considering the health of children, it is imperative not to omit the importance of keeping their brains fallow, as it were, for several of the first years of their existence. The mischief perpetrated by a contrary course in the shape of bad health, peevish temper, and developed vanity, is incalculable. It would not be just to attribute this altogether to the vanity of parents; they are influenced by a natural fear lest their children should not have all the advantages of other children. Some infant prodigy which is a standard of mischief throughout its neighbourhood

misleads them. But parents may be assured that this early work is not by any means all gain, even in the way of work. I suspect it is a loss; and that children who begin their education late, as it would be called, will rapidly overtake those who have been in harness long before them. And what advantage can it be that the child knows more at six years old than its compeers, especially if this is to be gained by a sacrifice of health which may never be regained? There may be some excuse for this early book-work in the case of those children who are to live by manual labour. It is worth while, perhaps, to run the risk of some physical injury to them, having only their early years in which we can teach them book-knowledge. The chance of mischief, too, will be less, being more likely to be counteracted by their after-life. But for a child who has to be at book-work for the first twenty-one years of its life, what folly it is to exhaust in the least the mental energy which, after all, is its surest implement.

A similar course of argument applies to taking children early to church, and to over-developing their minds in any way. There is no knowing, moreover, the disgust and weariness that may grow up in the minds of young persons from their attention being prematurely claimed. We are now, however, looking

at early study as a matter of health; and we may certainly put it down in the same class with impure air, stimulating diet, unnecessary bandages, and other manifest physical disadvantages. Civilized life, as it advances, does not seem to have so much repose in it, that we need begin early in exciting the mind, for fear of the man being too lethargical hereafter.

EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

It seems needful that something should be said specially about the education of women. As regards their intellects they have been unkindly treated—too much flattered, too little respected. They are shut up in a world of conventionalities, and naturally believe that to be the only world. The theory of their education seems to be, that they should not be made companions to men, and some would say, they certainly are not. These critics, however, in the high imaginations they justly form of what women's society might be to men, forget, perhaps, how excellent a thing it is already. Still the criticism is not by any means wholly unjust. It appears rather as if there had been a falling off since the olden times in the education of women. A writer of modern days, arguing on the other side, has said, that though we may

talk of the Latin and Greek of Lady Jane Grey and Queen Elizabeth, yet we are to consider that that was the only learning of the time, and that many a modern lady may be far better instructed, although she know nothing of Latin and Greek. Certain it is, she may know more facts, have read more books: but this does not assure us that she may not be less conversable, less companionable. Wherein does the cultivated and thoughtful man differ from the common man? In the method of his discourse. His questions upon a subject in which he is ignorant are full of interest. His talk has a groundwork of reason. This rationality must not be supposed to be dulness. Folly is dull. Now, would women be less charming if they had more power, or at least more appreciation, of reasoning? Their flatterers tell them that their intuition is such, that they need not man's slow processes of thought. One would be very sorry to have a grave question of law that concerned one's self decided upon by intuitive judges, or a question of fact by intuitive jurymen. And so of all human things that have to be canvassed, it is better, and more amusing too, that they should be discussed according to reason. Moreover, the exercise of the reasoning faculties gives much of the pleasure which there is in solid acquirements; so that the obvious facts in life

and history will hardly be acquired by those who are not in the habit of reasoning upon them. Hence it comes, that women have less interest in great topics, and less knowledge of them, than they might have.

Again, if either sex requires logical education, it is theirs. The sharp practice of the world drives some logic into the most vague of men: women are not so schooled.

But, supposing the deficiency we have been considering to be admitted, how is it to be remedied? Women's education must be made such as to ensure some accuracy and reasoning. This may be done with any subject of education, and is done with men, whatever they learn, because they are expected to produce and use their acquirements. But the greatest object of intellectual education, the improvement of the mental powers, is as needful for one sex as the other, and requires the same means in both sexes. The same accuracy, attention, logic, and method that are attempted in the education of men should be aimed at in that of women. This will never be sufficiently attended to, as there are no immediate and obvious fruits from it. And, therefore, as it is probable, from the different career of women to that of men, that whatever women study will not be studied with the

same method and earnestness as it would be by men, what a peculiar advantage there is in any study for them, in which no proficiency whatever can be made without some use of most of the qualities we desire for them. Geometry, for instance, is such a study. It may appear pedantic, but I must confess that Euclid seems to me a book for the young of both sexes. The severe rules upon which the acquisition of the dead languages is built would of course be a great means for attaining the logical habits in question. But Latin and Greek is a deeper pedantry for women than geometry, and much less desirable on many accounts; and geometry would, perhaps, suffice to teach them what reasoning is. I daresay, too, there are accomplishments which might be taught scientifically; and so even the prejudice against the manifest study of science by women be conciliated. But the appreciation of reasoning must be got somehow.

It is a narrow view of things to suppose that a just cultivation of women's mental powers will take them out of their sphere: it will only enlarge that sphere. The most cultivated women perform their common duties best. They see more in those duties. They can do more. Lady Jane Grey would, I daresay, have bound up a wound, or managed a household, with any unlearned woman of her day. Queen

Elizabeth did manage a kingdom: and we find no pedantry in her way of doing it.

People who advocate a better training for women must not, necessarily, be supposed to imagine that men and women are by education to be made alike, and are intended to fulfil most of the same offices. There seems reason for thinking that a boundary line exists between the intellects of men and women which, perhaps, cannot be passed over from either side. But, at any rate, taking the whole nature of both sexes, and the inevitable circumstances which cause them to differ, there must be such a difference between men and women that the same intellectual training applied to both would produce most dissimilar results. It has not, however, been proposed in these pages to adopt the same training: and would have been still less likely to be proposed if it could be shown that such training would tend to make men and women unpleasantly similar to each other. The utmost that has been thought of here is to make more of women's faculties, not by any means to translate them into men's—if such a thing were possible, which, we may venture to say, is not. There are some things that are good for all trees—light, air, room—but no one expects by affording some similar advantages of this kind to an oak and

a beech, to find them assimilate, though by such means the best of each may be produced.

Moreover, it should be recollected that the purpose of education is not always to foster natural gifts, but sometimes to bring out faculties that might otherwise remain dormant; and especially so far as to make the persons educated cognizant of excellence in those faculties in others. A certain tact and refinement belong to women, in which they have little to learn from the first: men, too, who attain some portion of these qualities, are greatly the better for them, and I should imagine not less acceptable on that account to women. So, on the other side, there may be an intellectual cultivation for women which may seem a little against the grain, which would not, however, injure any of their peculiar gifts—would, in fact, carry those gifts to the highest, and would increase withal, both to men and women, the pleasure of each others' society.

There is a branch of general education which is not thought at all necessary for women; as regards which, indeed, it is well if they are not brought up to cultivate the opposite. Women are not taught to be courageous. Indeed, to some persons courage may seem as unnecessary for women as Latin and Greek. Yet there are few things that would tend to make women happier in themselves, and more acceptable

to those with whom they live, than courage. There are many women of the present day, sensible women in other things, whose panic-terrors are a frequent source of discomfort to themselves and those around them. Now, it is a great mistake to imagine that harshness must go with courage; and that the bloom of gentleness and sympathy must all be rubbed off by that vigour of mind which gives presence of mind, enables a person to be useful in peril, and makes the desire to assist overcome that sickliness of sensibility which can only contemplate distress and difficulty. So far from courage being unfeminine, there is a peculiar grace and dignity in those beings who have little active power of attack or defence, passing through danger with a moral courage which is equal to that of the strongest. We see this in great things. We perfectly appreciate the sweet and noble dignity of an Anne Bullen, a Mary Queen of Scots, or a Marie Antoinette. We see that it is grand for these delicately-bred, high-nurtured, helpless personages to meet Death with a silence and a confidence like his own. But there would be a similar dignity in women's bearing small terrors with fortitude. There is no beauty in fear. It is a mean, ugly, dishevelled creature. No statue can be made of it that a woman would wish to see herself like.

Women are pre-eminent in steady endurance of tiresome suffering: they need not be far behind men in a becoming courage to meet that which is sudden and sharp. The dangers and the troubles, too, which we may venture to say they now start at unreasonably, are many of them mere creatures of the imagination—such as, in their way, disturb high-mettled animals brought up to see too little, and therefore frightened at any leaf blown across the road.

We may be quite sure that, without losing any of the most delicate and refined of feminine graces, women may be taught not to give way to unreasonable fears, which should belong no more to the fragile than to the robust.

There is no doubt that courage may in some measure be taught. We agree that the lower kinds of courage are matter of habit, therefore of teaching: and the same thing holds good to some extent of all courage. Courage is as contagious as fear. The saying is, that the brave are the sons and daughters of the brave; but we might as truly say, that they must be brought up by the brave. The great novelist, when he wants to show a coward descended from a valorous race, does well to take him from his clan and bring him up in an unwarlike home.*

* See *The Fair Maid of Perth.*

Indeed, the heroic example of other days is in great part the source of the courage of each generation: and men walk up composedly to the most perilous enterprises, beckoned onwards by the shades of the brave that were. In civil courage, moral courage, or courage shown in the minute circumstances of every-day life, the same law is true. Courage may be taught by precept, enforced by example, and is good to be taught to men, women, and children.

EDUCATION TO HAPPINESS.

It is a curious phenomenon in human affairs, that some of those matters in which education is most potent, should have been amongst the least thought of as branches of it. What you teach a boy of Latin and Greek may be good; but these things are with him but a little time of each day in his after-life. What you teach him of direct moral precepts may be very good seed: it may grow up, especially if it have sufficient moisture from experience; but then, again, a man is, happily, not doing obvious right or wrong all day long. What you teach him of any bread-getting art, may be of some import to him, as to the quantity and quality of bread he will get; but he is not always with his art. With himself he is always.

How important, then, it is, whether you have given him a happy or a morbid turn of mind; whether the current of his life is a clear wholesome stream, or bitter as Marah. The education to happiness is a possible thing—not to a happiness supposed to rest upon enjoyments of any kind, but to one built upon content and resignation. This is the best part of philosophy. This enters into the "wisdom" spoken of in the Scriptures. Now it can be taught. The converse is taught every day and all day long.

To take an example. A sensitive disposition may descend to a child; but it is also very commonly increased, and often created. Captiousness, sensitiveness, and a Martha-like care for the things of this world, are often the direct fruits of education. All these faults of the character, and they are amongst the greatest, may be summed up in a disproportionate care for little things. This is rather a growing evil. The painful neatness and exactness of modern life foster it. Long peace favours it. Trifles become more important, great evils being kept away. And so, the tide of small wishes and requirements gains upon us fully as fast as we can get out of its way by our improved means of satisfying them. Now the unwholesome concern that many parents and governors manifest as to small things must have a

great influence on the governed. You hear a child reprimanded about a point of dress, or some trivial thing, as if it had committed a treachery. The criticisms, too, which it hears upon others are often of the same kind. Small omissions, small commissions, false shame, little stumbling-blocks of offence, trifling grievances of the kind that Dr. Johnson, who had known hunger, stormed at Mrs. Thrale for talking about, are made much of; general dissatisfaction is expressed that things are not complete, and that everything in life is not turned out as neat as a Long-Acre carriage; commands are expected to be fulfilled by agents, upon very rapid and incomplete orders, exactly to the mind of the person ordering;— these ways, to which children are very attentive, teach them in their turn to be querulous, sensitive, and full of small cares and wishes. And when you have made a child like this, can you make a world for him that will satisfy him? Tax your civilization to the uttermost: a punctilious, tiresome disposition expects more. Indeed Nature, with her vague and flowing ways, cannot at all fit in with a right-angled person. Besides, there are other precise, angular creatures, and these sharp-edged persons wound each other terribly. Of all the things which you can teach people, after teaching them to trust in God, the most important

is, to put out of their hearts any expectation of perfection, according to their notions, in this world. This expectation is at the bottom of a great deal of the worldliness we hear so much reprehended, and necessarily gives to little things a most irrational importance.

Observe the effect of this disproportionate care for little things in the disputes of men. A man who does so care, has a garment embroidered with hooks, which catches at everything that passes by. He finds many more causes of offence than other men; and each offence is a more bitter thing to him than to others. He does not expect to be offended. Poor man! He goes through life wondering that he is the subject of general attack, and that the world is so quarrelsome.

The result of a bad education in developing undue care for trifles may be seen in its effect on domestic government and government in general. If those in power have this fault, they will make the persons under them miserable by petty, constant blame; or they will make them indifferent to all blame. If this fault is in the governed, they will captiously object to all the ways and plans of their superiors, not knowing the difficulty of doing anything; they will expect miracles of attention, justice, and temper, which the rough-hewed ways of men do not admit of; and they

will repine and tease the life out of those in authority. Sometimes, both superiors and inferiors, governors and governed, have this fault. This must often happen in a family, and is a fearful punishment to the elders of it. Scarcely any goodness of disposition, and what are called great qualities, can make such difficult materials work well together.

But I end with somewhat of the same argument as I began with; namely, that as a man lives more with himself than with art, science, or even with his fellows, a wise teacher, having before him the intent to make a happy-minded man of his pupil, will try to lay a groundwork of divine contentment in him. If he cannot make him easily pleased, he will at least try and prevent him from being easily disconcerted. Why, even the self-conceit that makes people indifferent to small things, wrapping them in an atmosphere of self-satisfaction, is welcome in a man compared to that querulousness which makes him an enemy to all around. But most commendable is that easiness of mind which is easy because it is tolerant, because it does not look to have everything its own way, because it expects anything but smooth usage in its course here, because it has resolved to manufacture as few miseries out of small evils as can be.

Most of us know what it is to vex our minds because we cannot recall some name or trivial thing which has escaped our memory for the moment. But then we think how foolish this is, what little concern it is to us. We are right in that; yet any defect of memory is a great concern compared to many of the trifling niceties, comforts, offences, and rectangularities which, perhaps, we do not think it an ignoble use of heart and time to waste ourselves upon. It would be well enough to entertain the rabble of small troubles and offences, if we could lay them aside with the delightful facility of children, who, after an agony of tears, are soon found laughing or asleep. But the chagrin and vexation of grown-up people are grown-up too; and, however childish in their origin, are not to be laughed or danced or slept away in child-like simple-heartedness.

We must not imagine that too much stress can well be laid upon the importance of an education to contentment, for it comes under the head of those things which are not adjuncts or acquisitions for a man, but which form the texture of his being. What a man has learnt is of importance, but what he is, what he can do, what he will become, are more significant things. Finally, it may be remarked, that, to make education a great work, we must have the educators

great; that book-learning is mainly good as it gives us a chance of coming into the company of greater and better minds than the average of men around us; and that individual greatness and goodness are the things to be aimed at rather than the successful cultivation of those talents which go to form some eminent membership of society. Each man is a drama in himself: has to play all the parts in it; is to be king and rebel, successful and vanquished, free and slave; and needs a bringing-up fit for the universal creature that he is.

Ellesmere. You have been unexpectedly merciful to us. The moment I heard the head of the essay given out, there flitted before my frightened mind volumes of reports, Battersea schools, Bell, Wilderspin, normal farms, National Society, British Schools, interminable questions about how religion might be separated altogether from secular education, or so much religion taught as all religious sects could agree in. These are all very good things and people to discuss, I daresay; but, to tell the truth, the whole subject sits heavy on my soul. I meet a man of inexhaustible dulness, and he talks to me for three hours about some great subject, this very one of education for instance, till I sit entranced by stupidity—thinking the while, "And this is what we are

to become by education—to be like you." Then I see a man like D——, a judicious, reasonable, conversable being, knowing how to be silent too—a man to go through a campaign with; and I find he cannot read or write.

Milverton. This sort of contrast is just the thing to strike you, Ellesmere: and yet you know as well as any of us, that to bring forward such contrasts by way of depreciating education would be most unreasonable. There are three things that go to make a man—the education that most people mean by education—then the education that goes deeper, the education of the soul—and thirdly, a man's gifts of nature. I agree with all you say about D——; he never says a foolish thing, and does a great many judicious ones. But look what a clever face he has. There are gifts of nature for you. Then, again, although he cannot read or write, he may have been most judiciously brought up in other respects. He may have had two, therefore, out of the three elements of education. What such instances would show, I believe, if narrowly looked into, is the immense importance of the education of heart and temper.

I feel with you in some measure about the dulness of the subject of education. But then it extends to all things of the institution kind. Men must have a great deal of pedantry, routine, and folly of all sorts, in any large matter they undertake. I had had this feeling for a long time (you know the way in which you have a thing in your mind, although you have never said it out exactly even to yourself); well, I came upon a passage of Emerson's which I will try to quote, and then I knew what it was that I had felt.

"We are full of mechanical actions. We must needs intermeddle, and have things in our own way, until the sacrifices and virtues of society are odious. Love should make joy; but our benevolence is unhappy. Our Sunday-schools, and churches, and pauper societies, are yokes to the neck. We pain ourselves to please nobody. There are natural ways of arriving at the same ends at which these aim, but do not arrive. Why should all virtue work in one and the same way?" . . . . "And why drag this dead weight of a Sunday-school over the whole of Christendom? It is natural and beautiful that childhood should inquire, and maturity should teach; but it is time enough to answer questions when they are asked. Do not shut up the young people against their will in a pew, and force the children to ask them questions for an hour against their will."

Now, without agreeing with him in all points, we may sympathize with him.

Ellesmere. I agree with him.

Dunsford. I knew you would. You love an extreme.

Milverton. But look now. It is well to say, "It is natural and beautiful that the young should ask and the old should teach;" but then the old should be capable of teaching, which is not the case we have to deal with. Institutions are often only to meet individual failings. Let there be more instructed elders, and the "dead weight" of Sunday-schools would be less needed.

I think the result of our thoughts would be, that there should be as much life, joy, and nature put into teaching as can be; but I, for one, am not prepared to say that the most mechanical process is not better than none.

Ellesmere. Well, you have now shut up the subject, according to your fashion, in a rounded sentence; and you think after that there is nothing more to be said. But I say it goes to my heart——

Dunsford. What is that?

Ellesmere. To my heart to see the unmerciful quantity of instruction that little children go through on a Sunday. I suppose I am a very wicked man, but I know how wearied I should have been, at any time of my life, if so much virtuous precept and good doctrine had been poured into me.

Milverton. Well, I will not fight certainly for anything that is to make Sunday a wearisome day for children. Indeed, what I meant by putting more joy and life into teaching was, that in such a thing as this Sunday-schooling, for instance, a judicious man, far from being anxious to get a certain quantity of routine done about it, would do with the least—would endeavour to connect it with something interesting—would, in a word, love children, and not Sunday-schools.

Ellesmere. Ah, we will have no more about Sunday-schools. I know we all agree in reality, although Dunsford has been looking very grave and has not said a word. I wanted to tell you that I think you are quite right, Milverton, in saying a good deal about multifariousness of pursuit. You see a wretch of a pedant who knows all about tetrameters or statutes of uses, but who, as you hinted an essay or two ago, can hardly answer his child a question as they walk about the garden together. The man has never given a good thought, or look, to nature. Well then, again, what a stupid thing it is that we are

not all taught music. Why learn the language of many portions of mankind, and leave the universal language of the feelings, as you would call it, unlearnt?

Milverton. I quite agree with you; but I thought you always set your face, or rather your ears, against music.

Dunsford. So did I.

Ellesmere. I should like to know all about it. It is not to my mind that a cultivated man should be quite thrown out by any topic of conversation, or that there should be any form of human endeavour or accomplishment which he has no conception of.

Dunsford. I liked what you said, Milverton, about the philosophy of making light of little things, and the way of looking at life that may thus be given to those we educate. I rather doubted at first, though, whether you were not going to assign too much power to education in the modification of temper. But, certainly, the mode of looking at the daily events of life, little or great, and the consequent habits of captiousness or magnanimity are just the matters which the young especially imitate their elders in.

Milverton. You see, the very worst kind of tempers are established upon the fretting care for trifles that I want to make war upon in the essay. A man is choleric. Well, it is a very bad thing; it tends to frighten those about him into falseness. He has outrageous bursts of temper. He is humble for days afterwards. His dependants rather like him after all. They know that "his bark is worse than his bite." Then there is your gloomy man—often a man who punishes himself most—perhaps

a large-hearted, humorous, but sad man—at the same time liveable with. He does not care for trifles. But it is your acid-sensitive (I must join words like Mirabeau's Grandison-Cromwell, to get what I mean) and your cold querulous people that need to have angels to live with them. Now education has often had a great deal to do with the making of these choice tempers. They are somewhat artificial productions. And they are the worst.

Dunsford. You know a saying attributed to the Bishop of —— about temper. No? Somebody, I suppose, was excusing something on the score of temper, to which the Bishop replied, "Temper is nine-tenths of Christianity."

Milverton. There is an appearance we see in nature, not far from here, by the way, that has often put me in mind of the effect of temper upon men. It is in the lowlands near the sea, where, when the tide is not up (the man out of temper), there is a slimy, patchy, diseased-looking surface of mud and sick seaweed. You pass by in a few hours, there is a beautiful lake, water up to the green grass (the man in temper again), and the whole landscape brilliant with reflected light.

Ellesmere. And to complete the likeness, the good temper and the full tide last about the same time—with some men at least. It is so like you, Milverton, to have that simile in your mind. There is nothing you see in nature, but you must instantly find a parallel for it in man. Sermons in stones you will not see, else I am sure you might. Here is a good hard flint for you to see your next essay in.

Milverton. It will do very well, as my next will be on the subject of population.

Ellesmere. What day are we to have it? I think I have a particular engagement for that day.

Milverton. I must come upon you unawares.

Ellesmere. After the essay you certainly might. Let us decamp now and do something great in the way of education—teach Rollo, though he is but a short-haired dog, to go into the water. That will be a feat.

CHAPTER IX.

ELLESMERE succeeded in persuading Rollo to go into the water, which proved more, he said, than the whole of Milverton's essay, how much might be done by judicious education. Before leaving my friends, I promised to come over again to Worth-Ashton in a day or two, to hear another essay. I came early and found them reading their letters.

"You remember Annesleigh at college," said Milverton, "do you not, Dunsford?"

Dunsford. Yes.

Milverton. Here is a long letter from him. He is evidently vexed at the newspaper articles about his conduct in the matter of ——, and writes to tell me that he is totally misrepresented.

Dunsford. Why does he not explain this publicly?

Milverton. Yes, you naturally think so at first, but such a mode of proceeding would never do for a man in office, and rarely, perhaps, for any man. At least, so the most judicious people seem to think. I have known a man in office bear patiently, without attempting any answer, a serious charge which a few lines would have entirely answered, indeed turned the other way. But

then he thought, I imagine, that if you once begin answering, there is no end to it, and also, which is more important, that the public journals were not a tribunal which he was called to appear before. He had his official superiors.

Dunsford. It should be widely known and acknowledged, then, that silence does not give consent in these cases.

Milverton. It is known, though not, perhaps, sufficiently.

Dunsford. What a fearful power this anonymous journalism is !

Milverton. There is a great deal certainly that is mischievous in it; but take it altogether, it is a wonderful product of civilization—morally too. Even as regards those qualities which would in general, to use a phrase of Bacon's, "be noted as deficients" in the press, in courtesy and forbearance, for example, it makes a much better figure than might have been expected; as any one would testify, I suspect, who had observed, or himself experienced, the temptations incident to writing on short notice, without much opportunity of after-thought or correction, upon subjects about which he had already expressed an opinion.

Dunsford. Is the anonymousness absolutely necessary ?

Milverton. I have often thought whether it is. If the anonymousness were taken away, the press would lose much of its power; but then why should it not lose a portion of its power, if that portion is only built upon some delusion ?

Ellesmere. It is a question of expediency. As government of all kinds becomes better managed, there is less necessity for protection for the press. It must be recollected, however, that this anonymousness (to coin a word) may not only be useful to protect us from any abuse of power, but that at least it takes away that temptation to discuss things in an insufficient manner which arises from personal fear of giving offence. Then, again, there is an advantage in considering arguments without reference to persons. If well-known authors wrote for the press and gave their signatures, we should often pass by the arguments unfairly, saying, "Oh, it is only so-and-so: that is the way he always looks at things," without seeing whether it is the right way for the occasion in question.

Milverton. But take the other side, Ellesmere. What national dislikes are fostered by newspaper articles, and——

Ellesmere. Articles in reviews and by books.

Milverton. Yes, but somehow or other, people imagine that newspapers speak the opinion of a much greater number of people——

Ellesmere. Do not let us talk any more about it. We may become wise enough and well-managed enough to do without this anonymousness: we may not. How it would astound an ardent Whig or Radical of the last generation if we could hear such a sentiment as this—as a toast we will say—"The Press: and may we become so civilized as to be able to take away some of its liberty."

Milverton. It may be put another way: May it

become so civilized that we shall not want to take away any of its liberty. But I see you are tired of this subject. Shall we go on the lawn and have our essay?

We assented, and Milverton read the following:—

UNREASONABLE CLAIMS IN SOCIAL AFFECTIONS AND RELATIONS.

WE are all apt to magnify the importance of whatever we are thinking about, which is not to be wondered at; for everything human has an outlet into infinity, which we come to perceive on considering it. But with a knowledge of this tendency, I still venture to say that, of all that concerns mankind, this subject has, perhaps, been the least treated of in regard to its significance. For once that unreasonable expectations of gratitude have been reproved, ingratitude has been denounced a thousand times: and the same may be said of inconstancy, unkindness in friendship, neglected merit, and the like.

To begin with ingratitude. Human beings seldom have the demands upon each other which they imagine; and for what they have done they frequently ask an impossible return. Moreover, when people really have done others a service, the persons benefited often do not understand it. Could they have understood it,

the benefactor, perhaps, would not have had to perform it. You cannot expect gratitude from them in proportion to your enlightenment. Then, again, where the service is a palpable one, thoroughly understood, we often require that the gratitude for it should bear down all the rest of the man's character. The dog is the very emblem of faithfulness: yet I believe it is found that he will sometimes like the person who takes him out and amuses him more than the person who feeds him. So, amongst bipeds, the most solid service must sometimes give way to the claims of congeniality. Human creatures are, happily, not to be swayed by self-interest alone: they are many-sided creatures; there are numberless modes of attaching their affections. Not only like likes like, but unlike likes unlike.

To give an instance which must often occur. Two persons, both of feeble will, act together: one as superior, the other as inferior. The superior is very kind; the inferior is grateful. Circumstances occur to break this relation. The inferior comes under a superior of strong will, who is not, however, as tolerant and patient as his predecessor. But this second superior soon acquires unbounded influence over the inferior: if the first one looks on, he may wonder at the alacrity and affection of his former subordinate towards the new man, and talk much about ingratitude,

But the inferior has now found somebody to lean upon and to reverence. And he cannot deny his nature and be otherwise than he is. In this case it does not look like ingratitude, except perhaps to the complaining person. But there are doubtless numerous instances in which, if we saw all the facts clearly, we should no more confirm the charge of ingratitude than we do here.

Then, again, we seldom make sufficient allowance for the burden which there is in obligation, at least to all but great and good minds. There are some people who can receive as heartily as they would give; but the obligation of an ordinary person to an ordinary person is more apt to be brought to mind as a present sore than as a past delight.

Amongst the unreasonable views of the affections, the most absurd one has been the fancy that love entirely depends upon the will; still more that the love of others for us is to be guided by the inducements which seem probable to us. We have served them; we think only of them; we are their lovers, or fathers, or brothers: we deserve and require to be loved and to have the love proved to us. But love is not like property: it has neither duties nor rights. You argue for it in vain; and there is no one who can give it you. It is not his or hers to give. Millions of bribes and infinite arguments cannot prevail. For it is not a sub-

stance, but a relation. There is no royal road. We are loved as we are loveable to the person loving. It is no answer to say that in some cases the love is based on no reality, but is solely in the imagination—that is, that we are loved not for what we are, but for what we are fancied to be. That will not bring it any more into the dominions of logic: and love still remains the same untameable creature, deaf to advocacy, blind to other people's idea of merit, and not a substance to be weighed or numbered at all.

Then, as to the complaints about broken friendship. Friendship is often outgrown: and his former child's clothes will no more fit a man than some of his former friendships. Often a breach of friendship is supposed to occur when there is nothing of the kind. People see one another seldom; their courses in life are different; they meet, and their intercourse is constrained. They fancy that their friendship is mightily cooled. But imagine the dearest friends, one coming home after a long sojourn, the other going out to new lands: the ships that carry these meet: the friends talk together in a confused way not relevant at all to their friendship, and, if not well assured of their mutual regard, might naturally fancy that it was much abated. Something like this occurs daily in the stream of the

world. Then, too, unless people are very unreasonable, they cannot expect that their friends will pass into new systems of thought and action without new ties of all kinds being created, and some modification of the old ones taking place.

When we are talking of exorbitant claims made for the regard of others, we must not omit those of what is called neglected merit. A man feels that he has abilities or talents of a particular kind, that he has shown them, and still he is a neglected man. I am far from saying that merit is sufficiently looked out for: but a man may take the sting out of any neglect of his merits by thinking that at least it does not arise from malice prepense, as he almost imagines in his anger. Neither the public, nor individuals, have the time, or will, resolutely to neglect anybody. What pleases us we admire and further: if a man in any profession, calling, or art, does things which are beyond us, we are as guiltless of neglecting him as the Caffres are of neglecting the differential calculus. Milton sells his "Paradise Lost" for ten pounds: there is no record of Shakespeare dining much with Queen Elizabeth. And it is Utopian to imagine that statues will be set up to the right men in their day.

The same arguments which applied to the com-

plaints of ingratitude, apply to the complaints of neglected merit. The merit is oftentimes not understood. Be it ever so manifest, it cannot absorb men's attention. When it is really great, it has not been brought out by the hope of reward, any more than the kindest services by the hope of gratitude. In neither case is it becoming or rational to be clamorous about payment.

There is one thing that people hardly ever remember, or, indeed, have imagination enough to conceive; namely, the effect of each man being shut up in his individuality. Take a long course of sayings and doings in which many persons have been engaged. Each one of them is in his own mind the centre of the web, though, perhaps, he is at the edge of it. We know that in our observations of the things of sense, any difference in the points from which the observation is taken gives a different view of the same thing. Moreover, in the world of sense, the objects and the points of view are each indifferent to the rest; but in life the points of view are centres of action that have had something to do with the making of the things looked at. If we could calculate the moral parallax arising from these causes, we should see, by the mere aid of the intellect, how unjust we often are

in our complaints of ingratitude, inconstancy, and neglect. But without these nice calculations, such errors of view may be corrected at once by humility, a more sure method than the most enlightened appreciation of the cause of error. Humility is the true cure for many a needless heartache.

It must not be supposed that in thus opposing unreasonable views of social affections, anything is done to dissever such affections. The Duke of Wellington, writing to a man in a dubious position of authority, says, "The less you claim, the more you will have." This is remarkably true of the affections: and there is scarcely anything that would make men happier than teaching them to watch against unreasonableness in their claims of regard and affection; and which at the same time would be more likely to ensure their getting what may be their due.

Ellesmere (clapping his hands). An essay after my heart: worth tons of soft trash. In general you are amplifying duties, telling everybody that they are to be so good to every other body. Now it is as well to let every other body know that he is not to expect all he may fancy from everybody. A man complains that his prosperous

friends neglect him: infinitely overrating, in all probability, his claims, and his friends' power of doing anything for him. Well, then, you may think me very hard, but I say that the most absurd claims are often put forth on the ground of relationship. I do not deny that there is something in blood, but it must not be made too much of. Near relations have great opportunities of attaching each other: if they fail to use these, I do not think it is well to let them imagine that mere relationship is to be a talisman of affection.

Dunsford. I do not see exactly how to answer all that you or Milverton have said: but I am not prepared, as official people say, to agree with you. I especially disagree with what Milverton has said about love. He leaves much too little power to the will.

Milverton. I daresay I may have done so. These are very deep matters, and any one view about them does not exhaust them. I remember C—— once saying to me that a man never utters anything without error. He may even think of it rightly; but he cannot bring it out rightly. It turns a little false, as it were, when it quits the brain and comes into life.

Ellesmere. I thought you would soon go over to the soft side. Here, Rollo; there's a good dog. You do not form unreasonable expectations, do you? A very little petting puts you into an ecstasy, and you are much wiser than many a biped who is full of his claims for gratitude, and friendship, and love, and who is always longing for well-merited rewards to fall into his mouth. Down, dog!

Milverton. Poor animal! it little knows that all this sudden notice is only by way of ridiculing us. Why I did

not maintain my ground stoutly against Dunsford is, that I am always afraid of pushing moral conclusions too far. Since we have been talking, I think I see more clearly than I did before what I mean to convey by the essay—namely, that men fall into unreasonable views respecting the affections *from imagining that the general laws of the mind are suspended for the sake of the affections.*

Dunsford. That seems safer ground.

Milverton. Now to illustrate what I mean by a very similar instance. The mind is avid of new impressions. It "travels over," or thinks it travels over, another mind: and, though it may conceal its wish for "fresh fields and pastures new," it does so wish. However harsh, therefore, and unromantic it may seem, the best plan is to humour nature, and not to exhaust by over-frequent presence the affection of those whom we would love, or whom we would have to love us. I would not say, after the manner of Rochefoucauld, that the less we see of people the more we like them; but there are certain limits of sociality; and prudent reserve and absence may find a place in the management of the tenderest relations.

Dunsford. Yes, all this is true enough: I do not see anything hard in this. But then there is the other side. Custom is a great aid to affection.

Milverton. Yes. All I say is, do not fancy that the general laws are suspended for the sake of any one affection.

Dunsford. Still this does not go to the question whether there is not something more of will in affection than you make out. You would speak of inducements and counter-inducements, aids and hindrances; but I

cannot but think you are limiting the power of will, and therefore limiting duty. Such views tend to make people easily discontented with each other, and prevent their making efforts to get over offences, and to find out what is loveable in those about them.

Ellesmere. Here we are in the deep places again. I see you are pondering, Milverton. It is a question, as a minister would say when Parliament perplexes him, that we must go to the country upon ; each man's heart will, perhaps, tell him best about it. For my own part, I think that the continuance of affection, as the rise of it, depends more on the taste being satisfied, or at least not disgusted, than upon any other single thing. Our hearts may be touched at our being loved by people essentially distasteful to us, whose modes of talking and acting are a continual offence to us ; but whether we can love them in return is a question.

Milverton. Yes, we can, I think. I begin to see that it is a question of degree. The word love includes many shades of meaning. When it includes admiration, of course we cannot be said to love those in whom we see nothing to admire. But this seldom happens in the mixed characters of real life. The upshot of it all seems to me to be, that, as Guizot says of civilization, every impulse has room ; so in the affections, every inducement and counter-inducement has its influence; and the result is not a simple one, which can be spoken of as if it were alike on all occasions and with all men.

Dunsford. I am still unanswered, I think, Milverton. What you say is still wholly built upon inducements, and does not touch the power of will.

Milverton. No ; it does not.

Ellesmere. We must leave that alone. Infinite piles of books have not as yet lifted us up to a clear view of that matter.

Dunsford. Well, then, we must leave it as a vexed question ; but let it be seen that there is such a question. Now, as to another thing; you speak, Milverton, of men's not making allowance enough for the unpleasant weight of obligation. I think that weight seems to have increased in modern times. Essex could give Bacon a small estate, and Bacon could take it comfortably, I have no doubt. That is a much more wholesome state of things among friends than the present.

Milverton. Yes, undoubtedly. An extreme notion about independence has made men much less generous in receiving.

Dunsford. It is a falling off, then. There was another comment I had to make. I think, when you speak about the exorbitant demands of neglected merit, you should say more upon the neglect of the just demands of merit.

Milverton. I would have the Government and the public in general try by all means to understand and reward merit, especially in those matters wherein excellence cannot, otherwise, meet with large present reward. But, to say the truth, I would have this done, not with the view of fostering genius so much as of fulfilling duty : I would say to a minister—it is becoming in you—it is well for the nation, to reward, as far as you can, and dignify, men of genius. Whether you will do them any good, or bring forth more of them, I do not know.

Ellesmere. Men of great genius are often such a sensitive race, so apt to be miserable in many other than pecuniary ways and want of public estimation, that I am not sure that distress and neglect do not take their minds off worse discomforts. It is a kind of grievance, too, that they like to have.

Dunsford. Really, Ellesmere, that is a most unfeeling speech.

Milverton. At any rate, it is right for us to honour and serve a great man. It is our nature to do so, if we are worth anything. We may put aside the question whether our honour will do him more good than our neglect. That is a question for him to look to. The world has not yet so largely honoured deserving men in their own time, that we can exactly pronounce what effect it would have upon them.

Ellesmere. Come, Rollo, let us leave the men of sentiment. Oh, you will not go, as your master does not move. Look how he wags his tail, and almost says, "I should dearly like to have a hunt after the water-rat we saw in the pond the other day, but master is talking philosophy, and requires an intelligent audience." These dogs are dear creatures, it must be owned. Come, Milverton, let us have a walk.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER the reading in the last chapter my friends walked homewards with me as far as Durely Wood, which is about half-way between Worth-Ashton and my house. As we rested there, we bethought ourselves that it would be a pleasant spot for us to come to sometimes and read our essays. So we agreed to name a day for meeting there. The day was favourable, we met as we had appointed, and finding some beech logs lying very opportunely, took possession of them for our council. We seated Ellesmere on one that we called the woolsack, but which he said he felt himself unworthy to occupy in the presence of King Log, pointing to mine. These nice points of etiquette being at last settled, Milverton drew out his papers and was about to begin reading, when Ellesmere thus interrupted him :—

Ellesmere. You were not in earnest, Milverton, about giving us an essay on population ? Because if so, I think I shall leave this place to you and Dunsford and the ants.

Milverton. I certainly have been meditating something of the sort; but have not been able to make much of it.

Ellesmere. If I had been living in those days when it first beamed upon mankind that the earth was round, I am sure I should have said, "We know now the bounds of the earth: there are no interminable plains joined to the regions of the sun, allowing of indefinite sketchy outlines at the edges of maps. That little creature man will immediately begin to think that his world is too small for him."

Milverton. There has probably been as much folly uttered by political economy as against it, which is saying something. The danger as regards theories of political economy is the obvious one of their abstract conclusions being applied to concrete things.

Ellesmere, As if we were to expect mathematical lines to bear weights.

Milverton. Something like that. With a good system of logic pervading the public mind, this danger would of course be avoided; but such a state of mind is not likely to occur in any public that we or our grandchildren are likely to have to deal with. As it is, an ordinary man hears some conclusion of political economy, showing some particular tendency of things, which in real life meets with many counteractions of all kinds: but he, perhaps, adopts the conclusion without the least abatement, and would work it into life, as if all went on there like a rule-of-three sum.

Ellesmere. After all, this error arises from the man's not having enough political economy. It is not that a

theory is good on paper, but unsound in real life. It is only that in real life you cannot get at the simple state of things to which the theory would rightly apply. You want many other theories, and the just composition of them all, to be able to work the whole problem. That being done (which, however, scarcely can be done), the result on paper might be read off as applicable at once to life. But now, touching the essay; since we are not to have population, what is it to be?

Milverton. Public improvements.

Ellesmere. Nearly as bad; but as this is a favourite subject of yours, I suppose it will not be polite to go away.

Milverton. No; you must listen.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS.

WHAT are possessions? To an individual, the stores of his own heart and mind pre-eminently. His truth and valour are amongst the first. His contentedness, or his resignation, may be put next. Then his sense of beauty, surely a possession of great moment to him. Then all those mixed possessions which result from the social affections—great possessions, unspeakable delights, much greater than the gift last mentioned in the former class, but held on more uncertain tenure. Lastly, what are generally called possessions. However often we have

heard of the vanity, uncertainty, and vexation that beset these last, we must not let this repetition deaden our minds to the fact.

Now, national possessions must be estimated by the same gradation that we have applied to individual possessions. If we consider national luxury, we shall see how small a part it may add to national happiness. Men of deserved renown, and peerless women, lived upon what we should now call the coarsest fare, and paced the rushes in their rooms with as high, or as contented thoughts, as their better-fed and better-clothed descendants can boast of. Man is limited in this direction; I mean, in the things that concern his personal gratification; but when you come to the higher enjoyments, the expansive power both in him and them is greater. As Keats says,

> "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

What then are a nation's possessions? The great words that have been said in it; the great deeds that have been done in it; the great buildings, and the great works of art, that have been made in it. A man says a noble saying: it is a possession, first to his own race, then to mankind. A people get a noble

building built for them: it is an honour to them, also a daily delight and instruction. It perishes. The remembrance of it is still a possession. If it was indeed pre-eminent, there will be more pleasure in thinking of it than in being with others of inferior order and design.

On the other hand, a thing of ugliness is potent for evil. It deforms the taste of the thoughtless: it frets the man who knows how bad it is: it is a disgrace to the nation who raised it; an example and an occasion for more monstrosities. If it is a great building in a great city, thousands of people pass it daily, and are the worse for it, or at least not the better. It must be done away with. Next to the folly of doing a bad thing is that of fearing to undo it. We must not look at what it has cost, but at what it is. Millions may be spent upon some foolish device which will not the more make it into a possession, but only a more noticeable detriment.

It must not be supposed that works of art are the only, or the chief, public improvements needed in any country. Wherever men congregate, the elements become scarce. The supply of air, light, and water is then a matter of the highest public importance:

and the magnificent utilitarianism of the Romans should precede the nice sense of beauty of the Greeks. Or rather, the former should be worked out in the latter. Sanitary improvements, like most good works, may be made to fulfil many of the best human objects. Charity, social order, conveniency of living, and the love of the beautiful, may all be furthered by such improvements. A people is seldom so well employed as when, not suffering their attention to be absorbed by foreign quarrels and domestic broils, they bethink themselves of winning back those blessings of nature which assemblages of men mostly vitiate, exclude, or destroy.

Public improvements are sometimes most difficult in free countries. The origination of them is difficult there, many diverse minds having to be persuaded. The individual, or class, resistance to the public good, is harder to conquer than in despotic states. And, what is most embarrassing, perhaps, individual progress in the same direction, or individual doings in some other way, form a great hindrance, sometimes to public enterprise. On the other hand, the energy of a free people is a mine of public welfare: and individual effort brings many good things to bear in much shorter time than any

government could be expected to move in. A judicious statesman considers these things; and sets himself especially to overcome those peculiar obstacles to public improvement which belong to the institutions of his country. Adventure in a despotic state, combined action in a free state, are the objects which peculiarly demand his attention.

To return to works of art. In this also the genius of the people is to be heeded. There may have been, there may be, nations requiring to be diverted from the love of art to stern labour and industrial conquests. But certainly it is not so with the Anglo-Saxon race, or with the Northern races generally. Money may enslave them; logic may enslave them; art never will. The chief men, therefore, in these races will do well sometimes to contend against the popular current, and to convince their people that there are other sources of delight, and other objects worthy of human endeavour, than severe money-getting or mere material successes of any kind.

In fine, the substantial improvement, and even the embellishment of towns, is a work which both the central and local governing bodies in a country should keep a steady hand upon. It especially concerns them. What are they there for but to do that which individuals cannot do? It concerns

them, too, as it tells upon the health, morals, education, and refined pleasures of the people they govern. In doing it, they should avoid pedantry, parsimony, and favouritism: and their mode of action should be large, considerate and foreseeing. Large; inasmuch as they must not easily be contented with the second best in any of their projects. Considerate; inasmuch as they have to think what their people need most, not what will make most show. And therefore, they should be contented, for instance, at their work going on underground for a time, or in byways, if needful; the best charity in public works, as in private, being often that which courts least notice. Lastly, their work should be with foresight; recollecting that cities grow up about us like young people, before we are aware of it.

Ellesmere. Another very merciful essay! When we had once got upon the subject of sanitary improvements, I thought we should soon be five fathom deep in blue-books, reports, interminable questions of sewerage, and horrors of all kinds.

Milverton. I am glad you own that I have been very tender of your impatience in this essay. People, I trust, are now so fully aware of the immense importance of sanitary improvements, that we do not want the elementary

talking about such things that was formerly necessary. It is difficult, though, to say too much about sanitary matters, that is, if by saying much one could gain attention. I am convinced that the most fruitful source of physical evil to mankind has been impure air, arising from circumstances which might have been obviated. Plagues and pestilences of all kinds, cretinism too, and all scrofulous disorders, are probably mere questions of ventilation. A district may require ventilation as well as a house.

Ellesmere. Seriously speaking, I quite agree with you. And what delights me in sanitary improvements is, that they can hardly do harm. Give a poor man good air, and you do not diminish his self-reliance. You only add to his health and vigour, make more of a man of him. But now that the public mind, as it is facetiously called, has got hold of the idea of these improvements, everybody will be chattering about them.

Milverton. The very time when those who really do care for these matters should be watchful to make the most of the tide in their favour, and should not suffer themselves to relax their efforts because there is no originality now about such things.

Dunsford. Custom soon melts off the wings which Novelty alone has lent to Benevolence.

Ellesmere. And down comes the charitable Icarus. A very good simile, my dear Dunsford, but rather of the Latin-verse order. I almost see it worked into an hexameter and pentameter, and delighting the heart of an Eton boy.

Dunsford. Ellesmere is more than usually vicious to-

day, Milverton. A great "public improvement" would be to clip the tongues of some of these lawyers.

Ellesmere. Possibly. I have just been looking again at that part of the essay, Milverton, where you talk of the little gained by national luxury. I think with you. There is an immensity of nonsense uttered about making people happy, which is to be done, according to happiness-mongers, by quantities of sugar and tea, and such-like things. One knows the importance of food; but there is no Elysium to be got out of it.

Milverton. I know what you mean. There is a kind of pity for the people now in vogue which is most effeminate. It is a sugared sort of Robespierre talk about "The poor but virtuous People." To address such stuff to the people is not to give them anything, but to take away what they have. Suppose you could give them oceans of tea and mountains of sugar, and abundance of any luxury that you choose to imagine, but at the same time you inserted a hungry, envious spirit in them, what have you done? Then, again, this envious spirit, when it is turned to difference of station, what good can it do? Can you give station according to merit? Is life long enough for it?

Ellesmere. Of course we cannot always be weighing men with nicety, and saying, "Here is your place, here yours."

Milverton. Then, again, what happiness do you confer on men by teaching them to disrespect their superiors in rank, by turning all the embellishments which adorn various stations wrong side out, putting everything in its lowest form, and then saying, "What do you see to

admire here?" You do not know what injury you may do a man when you destroy all reverence in him. It will be found out some day that men derive more pleasure and profit from having superiors than from having inferiors.

Dunsford. It is seldom that I bring you back to your subject, but we are really a long way off at present: and I want to know, Milverton, what you would do specifically in the way of public improvements. Of course you cannot say in an essay what you would do in such matters, but amongst ourselves. In London, for instance.

Milverton. The first thing for Government to do, Dunsford, in London, or any other great town, is to secure open spaces in it and about it. Trafalgar Square may be dotted with hideous absurdities, but it is an open space. They may collect together there specimens of every variety of meanness and bad taste; but they cannot prevent its being a better thing than if it were covered with houses. Public money is scarcely ever so well employed as in securing bits of waste ground and keeping them as open spaces. Then, as under the most favourable circumstances, we are likely to have too much carbon in the air of any town, we should plant trees to restore the just proportions of the air as far as we can.* Trees are also what the heart and the eye desire most in towns. The Boulevards in Paris show the excellent effect of trees against buildings. There are many parts of London where rows of trees might be planted along the streets. The weighty dulness of Portland Place, for

* See *Health of Towns Report*, 1844, vol. i. p. 44.

instance, might be thus relieved. Of course, in any scheme of public improvements, the getting rid of smoke is one of the first objects.

Ellesmere. Yes, smoke is a great abuse; but then there is something ludicrous about it: just as there is about sewerage. I believe, myself, that for one person that the corn-laws have injured, a dozen have had their lives shortened and their happiness abridged in every way by these less palpable nuisances. But there is no grandeur in opposing them: no "good cry" to be raised. And so, as abuses cannot be met in our days but by agitation—a committee, secretaries, clerks, newspapers, and a review—and as agitation in this case holds out fewer inducements than usual, we have gone on year after year being poisoned by these various nuisances, at an incalculable expense of life and money.

Milverton. There is something in what you say, I think; but you press it too far; for of late these sanitary subjects have worked themselves into notice, as you yourself admit.

Ellesmere. Late indeed.

Milverton. Well, but to go on with schemes for improving London. Open spaces, trees—then comes the supply of water. This is one of the first things to be done. Philadelphia has given an example which all towns ought to imitate. It is a matter requiring great thought, and the various plans should be thoroughly canvassed before the choice is made. Great beauty and the highest utility may be combined in supplying a town like London with water. By the way, how much water do you think London requires daily?

Ellesmere. As much as the Serpentine and the water in St. James's Park.

Milverton. You are not so far out.

Well, then, having gone through the largest things that must be attended to, we come to minor matters. It is a great pity that the system of building upon leases should be so commonly adopted. Nobody expects to live out the leasehold term which he takes to build upon. But things would be better done if people were more averse to having anything to do with leasehold property. C. always says that the modern lath-and-plaster system is a wickedness, and upon my word I think he is right. It is inconceivable to me how a man can make up his mind to build, or to do anything else, in a temporary, slight, insincere fashion. What has a man to say for himself, who must sum up the doings of his life in this way: "I chiefly employed myself in making or selling things which seemed to be good and were not; and nobody has occasion to bless me for anything I have done."

Ellesmere. Humph! you put it mildly. But the man has made perhaps seven per cent. off his money, or if he has made no per cent. has ruined several men of his own trade, which is not to go for nothing, when a man is taking stock of his good deeds.

Milverton. There is one thing I forgot to say, that we want more individual will in building, I think. As it is at present, a great builder takes a plot of ground and turns out innumerable houses, all alike, the same faults and merits running through each: thus adding to the general dulness of things.

Ellesmere. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, when she came from abroad, remarked that all her friends seemed to have got into drawing-rooms which were like a grand-piano, first a large square or oblong room, and then a small one. Quite Georgian, this style of architecture. But now I think we are improving immensely, at any rate in the outside of houses. By the way, Milverton, I want to ask you one thing: How is it that Governments and Committees, and the bodies that manage matters of taste, seem to be more tasteless than the average run of people? I will wager anything that the cabmen round Trafalgar Square would have made a better thing of it than it is. If you had put before them several prints of fountains, they would not have chosen those.

Milverton. I think with you, but I have no theory to account for it. I suppose that these committees are frequently hampered by other considerations than those which come before the public when they are looking at the work done; and this may be some excuse. There was a custom which I have heard prevailed in former days in some of the Italian cities, of making large models of the works of art that were to adorn the city, and putting them up in the places intended for the works when finished, and then inviting criticism. It would really be a very good plan in some cases.

Ellesmere. Now, Milverton, would you not forthwith pull down such things as Buckingham Palace and the National Gallery? Dunsford looks at me as if I were going to pull down the Constitution.

Milverton. I would pull them down to a certainty, or

some parts of them at any rate; but whether "forthwith," is another question. There are greater things, perhaps, to be done first. We must consider, too,

> "That eternal want of pence
> Which vexes public men."

Still I think we ought always to look upon such buildings as temporary arrangements, and they vex one less then. The Palace ought to be in the higher part of the Park, perhaps on that slope opposite Piccadilly.

Dunsford. Well, it does amuse me the way in which you youngsters go on, pulling down, in your industrious imaginations, palaces and national galleries, building aqueducts and cloacæ maximæ, forming parks, destroying smoke, so large a part of every Londoner's diet, and abridging plaster, without fear of Chancellors of the Exchequer, and the resistance of mankind in general.

Milverton. We must begin by thinking boldly about things. That is a larger part of any undertaking than it seems, perhaps.

Dunsford. We must, I am afraid, break off our pleasant employment of projecting public improvements, unless we mean to be dinnerless.

Ellesmere. A frequent fate of great projectors, I fear.

Milverton. Now then, homewards.

CHAPTER XI.

My readers will, perhaps, agree with me in being sorry to find that we are coming to the end of our present series. I say, "my readers," though I have so little part in purveying for them, that I mostly consider myself one of them. It is no light task; however, to give a good account of a conversation; and I say this, and would wish people to try whether I am not right in saying so, not to call attention to my labour in the matter, but because it may be well to notice how difficult it is to report anything truly. Were this better known, it might be an aid to charity, and prevent some of those feuds which grow out of the poverty of man's power to express, to apprehend, to represent, rather than out of any malignant part of his nature. But I must not go on moralising. I almost feel that Ellesmere is looking over my shoulder, and breaking into my discourse with sharp words, which I have lately been so much accustomed to.

I had expected that we should have many more

readings this summer, as I knew that Milverton had prepared more essays for us. But finding, as he said, that the other subjects he had in hand were larger than he had anticipated, or was prepared for, he would not read even to *us* what he had written. Though I was very sorry for this, for I may not be the chronicler in another year, I could not but say he was right. Indeed, my ideas of literature, nourished as they have been in much solitude, and by the reading, if I may say so, mainly of our classical authors, are very high placed, though I hope not fantastical. And, therefore, I would not discourage any one in expending whatever thought and labour might be in him upon any literary work.

In fine, then, I did not attempt to dissuade Milverton from his purpose of postponing our readings; and we agreed that there should only be one more for the present. I wished it to be at our favourite place on the lawn, which had become endeared to me as the spot of many of our friendly councils.

It was later than usual when I came over to Worth-Ashton for this reading; and as I gained the brow of the hill, some few clouds tinged with red were just grouping together to form the accustomed pomp upon the exit of the setting sun. I believe I mentioned in

the introduction to our first conversation that the ruins of an old castle could be seen from our place of meeting. Milverton and Ellesmere were talking about it as I joined them.

Milverton. Yes, Ellesmere, many a man has looked out of those windows upon a sunset like this, with some of the thoughts that must come into the minds of all men on seeing this great emblem, the setting sun—has felt, in looking at it, his coming end, or the closing of his greatness. Those old walls must have been witness to every kind of human emotion. Henry the Second was there; John, I think; Margaret of Anjou and Cardinal Beaufort; William of Wykeham; Henry the Eighth's Cromwell; and many others who have made some stir in the world.

Ellesmere. And, perhaps, the greatest there were those who made no stir.

"The world knows nothing of its greatest men."

Milverton. I am slow to believe that. I cannot well reconcile myself to the idea that great capacities are given for nothing. They bud out in some way or other.

Ellesmere. Yes, but it may not be in a noisy way.

Milverton. There is one thing that always strikes me very much in looking at the lives of men: how soon, as it were, their course seems to be determined. They do, or think, something which gives a bias to the whole of their career.

Dunsford. You may go farther back than that, and speak of the impulses they get from their ancestors.

Ellesmere. Or the nets around them of other people's ways and wishes. There are many things, you see, that go to make men puppets.

Milverton. I was only noticing the circumstance that there was such a thing, as it appeared to me, as this early direction. But, if it has been ever so unfortunate, a man's folding his hands over it in a melancholy mood, and suffering himself to be made a puppet by it, is a sadly weak proceeding. Most thoughtful men have probably some dark fountains in their souls, by the side of which, if there were time, and it were decorous, they could let their thoughts sit down and wail indefinitely. That long Byron wail fascinated men for a time; because there is that in human nature. Luckily, a great deal besides.

Ellesmere. I delight in the helpful and hopeful men.

Milverton. A man that I admire very much, and have met with occasionally, is one who is always of use in any matter he is mixed up with, simply because he wishes that the best should be got out of the thing that is possible. There does not seem much in the description of such a character; but only see it in contrast with that of a brilliant man, for instance, who does not ever fully care about the matter in hand.

Dunsford. I can thoroughly imagine the difference.

Milverton. The human race may be bound up together in some mysterious way, each of us having a proper interest in the fortunes of the whole, and so, to a certain extent, of every portion of it. Such a man as I described acts as though he had an intuitive percep-

tion of that relation, and therefore a sort of family feeling for mankind, which gives him satisfaction in making the best out of any human affair he has to do with.

But we really must have the essay, and not talk any more. It is on History.

HISTORY.

AMONG the fathomless things that are about us and within us, is the continuity of time. This gives to life one of its most solemn aspects. We may think to ourselves: Would there could be some halting-place in life, where we could stay, collecting our minds, and see the world drift by us. But no: even while you read this, you are not pausing to read it. As one of the great French preachers, I think, says, We are embarked upon a stream, each in his own little boat, which must move uniformly onwards, till it ceases to move at all. It is a stream that knows "no haste, no rest;" a boat that knows no haven but one.

This unbated continuity suggests the past as well as the future. We would know what mighty empires this stream of time has flowed through, by what battle-fields it has been tinged, how it has been employed towards fertility, and what beautiful shadows

on its surface have been seized by art, or science, or great words, and held in time-lasting, if not in everlasting, beauty. This is what history tells us. Often in a faltering, confused, bedarkened way, like the deed it chronicles. But it is what we have, and we must make the best of it.

The subject of this essay may be thus divided: Why history should be read—how it should be read—by whom it should be written—how it should be written—and how good writers of history should be called forth, aided, and rewarded.

I. WHY HISTORY SHOULD BE READ.

It takes us out of too much care for the present; it extends our sympathies; it shows us that other men have had their sufferings and their grievances; it enriches discourse, it enlightens travel. So does fiction. But the effect of history is more lasting and suggestive. If we see a place which fiction has treated of, we feel that it has some interest for us; but show us a spot where remarkable deeds have been done, or remarkable people have lived, and our thoughts cling to it. We employ our own imagination about it: we invent the fiction for ourselves.

Again, history is at least the conventional account of things : that which men agree to receive as the right account, and which they discuss as true. To understand their talk, we must know what they are talking about. Again, there is something in history which can seldom be got from the study of the lives of individual men ; namely, the movements of men collectively, and for long periods—of man, in fact, not of men. In history, the composition of the forces that move the world has to be analysed. We must have before us the law of the progress of opinion, the interruptions to it of individual character, the principles on which men act in the main, the trade winds, as we may say, in human affairs, and the recurrent storms which one man's life does not tell us of. Again, by the study of history, we have a chance of becoming tolerant, travelling over the ways of many nations and many periods ; and we may also acquire that historic tact by which we collect upon one point of human affairs the light of many ages.

We may judge of the benefit of historical studies by observing what great defects are incident to the moral and political writers who know nothing of history. A present grievance, or what seems such, swallows up in their minds all other considerations ; their little bottle of oil is to still the raging waves of the whole

human ocean; their system, a thing that the historian has seen before, perhaps, in many ages, is to reconcile all diversities. Then they would persuade you that this class of men is wholly good, that wholly bad; or that there is no difference between good and bad. They may be shrewd men, considering what they have seen, but would be much shrewder if they could know how small a part that is of life. We may all refer to our boyhood, and recollect the time when we thought the things about us were the type of all things everywhere. That was, perhaps, after all, no silly princess who was for feeding the famishing people on cakes. History takes us out of this confined circle of child-like thought; and shows us what are the perennial aims, struggles, and distractions of mankind.

History has always been set down as the especial study for statesmen, and for men who take interest in public affairs. For history is to nations what biography is to individual men. History is the chart and compass for national endeavour. Our early voyagers are dead: not a plank remains of the old ships that first essayed unknown waters; the sea retains no track; and were it not for the history of these voyages contained in charts, in chronicles, in hoarded lore of all kinds, each voyager, though he were to start with all the aids of advanced civiliza-

tion (if you could imagine such a thing without history), would need the boldness of the first voyager.

And so it would be with the statesman, were the civil history of mankind unknown. We live to some extent in peace and comfort upon the results obtained for us by the chronicles of our forefathers. We do not see this without some reflection. But imagine what a full-grown nation would be if it knew no history—like a full-grown man with only a child's experience.

The present is an age of remarkable experiences. Vast improvements have been made in several of the outward things that concern life nearly, from intercourse rapid as lightning to surgical operation without pain. We accept them all; still the difficulties of government, the management of ourselves, our relations with others, and many of the prime difficulties of life remain but little subdued. History still claims our interest, is still wanted to make us think and act with any breadth of wisdom.

At the same time, however, that we claim for history great powers of instruction, we must not imagine that the examples which it furnishes will enable its readers to anticipate the experience of life. An inexperienced man reads that Cæsar did

this or that, but he says to himself, "I am not Cæsar." Or, indeed, as is most probable, the reader has not to reject the application of the example to himself: for from first to last he sees nothing but experience for Cæsar in what Cæsar was doing. I think it may be observed, too, that general maxims about life gain the ear of the inexperienced, in preference to historical examples. But neither wise sayings nor historical examples can be understood without experience. Words are only symbols. Who can know anything soundly with respect to the complicated affections and struggles of life, unless he has experienced some of them? All knowledge of humanity spreads from within. So, in studying history, the lessons it teaches must have something to grow round in the heart they teach. Our own trials, misfortunes, and enterprises are the best lights by which we can read history. Hence it is that many an historian may see far less into the depths of the very history he has himself written than a man who, having acted and suffered, reads the history in question with all the wisdom that comes from action and suffering. Sir Robert Walpole might naturally exclaim, "Do not read history to me, for that, I know, must be false." But if he had read it, I do not doubt that he would have seen through the

film of false and insufficient narrative into the depth of the matter narrated, in a way that men of great experience can alone attain to.

2. HOW HISTORY SHOULD BE READ.

I suppose that many who now connect the very word history with the idea of dulness, would have been fond and diligent students of history if it had had fair access to their minds. But they were set down to read histories which were not fitted to be read continuously, or by any but practised students. Some such works are mere framework, a name which the author of the *Statesman* applies to them; very good things, perhaps, for their purpose, but that is not to invite readers to history. You might almost as well read dictionaries with a hope of getting a succinct and clear view of language. When, in any narration, there is a constant heaping up of facts, made about equally significant by the way of telling them, a hasty delineation of characters, and all the incidents moving on as in the fifth act of a confused tragedy, the mind and memory refuse to be so treated; and the reading ends in nothing but a very slight and inaccurate acquaintance with the mere husk of the history. You cannot epitomise the knowledge that it would take years

to acquire into a few volumes that may be read in as many weeks.

The most likely way of attracting men's attention to historical subjects will be by presenting them with small portions of history, of great interest, thoroughly examined. This may give them the habit of applying thought and criticism to historical matters.

For, as it is, how are people interested in history? and how do they master its multitudinous assemblage of facts? Mostly, perhaps, in this way. A man cares about some one thing, or person, or event; and plunges into its history, really wishing to master it. This pursuit extends: other points of research are taken up by him at other times. His researches begin to intersect. He finds a connection in things. The texture of his historic acquisitions gradually attains some substance and colour; and so at last he begins to have some dim notions of the myriads of men who came, and saw, and did not conquer—only struggled on as they best might, some of them—and are not.

When we are considering how history should be read, the main thing perhaps is, that the person reading should desire to know what he is reading about, not merely to have read the books that tell of it. The most elaborate and careful historian must

omit, or pass slightly over, many parts of his subject. He writes for all readers, and cannot indulge private fancies. But history has its particular aspect for each man: there must be portions which he may be expected to dwell upon. And everywhere, even where the history is most laboured, the reader should have something of the spirit of research which was needful for the writer: if only so much as to ponder well the words of the writer. That man reads history, or anything else, at great peril of being thoroughly misled, who has no perception of any truthfulness except that which can be fully ascertained by reference to facts; who does not in the least perceive the truth, or the reverse, of a writer's style, of his epithets, of his reasoning, of his mode of narration. In life, our faith in any narration is much influenced by the personal appearance, voice, and gesture of the person narrating. There is some part of all these things in his writing; and you must look into that well before you can know what faith to give him. One man may make mistakes in names, and dates, and references, and yet have a real substance of truthfulness in him, a wish to enlighten himself and then you. Another may not be wrong in his facts, but have a declamatory or sophistical vein in him, much to be guarded against. A third may be both inaccurate and untruth-

ful, caring not so much for anything as to write his book. And if the reader cares only to read it, sad work they make between them of the memories of former days.

In studying history, it must be borne in mind that a knowledge is necessary of the state of manners, customs, wealth, arts, and science at the different periods treated of. The text of civil history requires a context of this knowledge in the mind of the reader. For the same reason, some of the main facts of the geography of the countries in question should be present to him. If we are ignorant of these aids to history, all history is apt to seem alike to us. It becomes merely a narrative of men of our own time, in our own country; and then we are prone to expect the same views and conduct from them that we do from our contemporaries. It is true that the heroes of antiquity have been represented on the stage in bag-wigs, and the rest of the costume of our grandfathers; but it was the great events of their lives that were thus told—the crises of their passions —and when we are contemplating the representation of great passions and their consequences, all minor imagery is of little moment. In a long-drawn narrative, however, the more we have in our minds of what concerned the daily life of the people we read about,

the better. And in general it may be said that history, like travelling, gives a return in proportion to the knowledge that a man brings to it.

3. BY WHOM HISTORY SHOULD BE WRITTEN.

Before entering directly on this part of the subject, it is desirable to consider a little the difficulties in the way of writing history. We all know the difficulty of getting at the truth of a matter which happened yesterday, and about which we can examine the living actors upon oath. But in history the most significant things may lack the most important part of their evidence. The people who were making history were not thinking of the convenience of future writers of history. Often the historian must contrive to get his insight into matters from evidence of men and things which is like bad pictures of them. The contemporary, if he knew the man, said of the picture, "I should have known it, but it has very little of him in it." The poor historian, with no original before him, has to see through the bad picture into the man. Then, supposing our historian rich in well-selected evidence—I say well-selected, because, as students tell us, for many an historian one authority is of the same weight as another, provided they are both of the same age; still

how difficult is narration even to the man who is rich in well-selected evidence. What a tendency there is to round off a narrative into falsehood; or else by parentheses to destroy its pith and continuity. Again, the historian knows the end of many of the transactions he narrates. If he did not, how differently often he would narrate them. It would be a most instructive thing to give a man the materials for the account of a great transaction, stopping short of the end, and then see how different would be his account from the ordinary ones. Fools have been hardly dealt with in the saying that the event is their master ("eventus stultorum magister"), seeing how it rules us all. And in nothing more than in history. The event is always present to our minds; along the pathways to it, the historian and the moralist have walked till they are beaten pathways, and we imagine that they were so to the men who first went along them. Indeed, we almost fancy that these ancestors of ours, looking along the beaten path, foresaw the event as we do; whereas they mostly stumbled upon it suddenly in the forest. This knowledge of the end we must, therefore, put down as one of the most dangerous pitfalls which beset the writers of history. Then consider the difficulty in the "composition," to use an artist's word, of our historian's picture. Before both the artist and the

historian lies Nature as far as the horizon; how shall they choose that portion of it which has some unity and which shall represent the rest? What method is needful in the grouping of facts; what learning, what patience, what accuracy!

By whom then should history be written? In the first place, by men of some experience in real life; who have acted and suffered; who have been in crowds, and seen, perhaps felt, how madly men can care about nothings; who have observed how much is done in the world in an uncertain manner, upon sudden impulses and very little reason; and who, therefore, do not think themselves bound to have a deep-laid theory for all things. They should be men who have studied the laws of the affections, who know how much men's opinions depend on the time in which they live, how they vary with their age and their position. To make themselves historians, they should also have considered the combinations amongst men and the laws that govern such things; for there are laws. Moreover, our historians, like most men who do great things, must combine in themselves qualities which are held to belong to opposite natures; must at the same time be patient in research and vigorous in imagination, energetic and calm, cautious and enterprising. Such historians, wise, as we may

suppose they will be, about the affairs of other men, may, let us hope, be sufficiently wise about their own affairs to understand that no great work can be done without great labour, that no great labour ought to look for its reward. But my reader will exclaim, as Rasselas to Imlac on hearing the requisites for a poet, "Enough! thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be *an historian*. Proceed with thy narration."

4. HOW HISTORY SHOULD BE WRITTEN.

One of the first things in writing history is for the historian to recollect that it is history he is writing. The narrative must not be oppressed by reflections, even by wise ones. Least of all should the historian suffer himself to become entangled by a theory or a system. If he does, each fact is taken up by him in a particular way: those facts that cannot be so handled cease to be his facts; and those that offer themselves conveniently are received too fondly by him.

Then, although our historian must not be mastered by system, he must have some way of taking up his facts and of classifying them. They must not be mere isolated units in his eyes, else he is mobbed by them. And a man in the midst of a crowd, though he may

know the names and nature of all the crowd, cannot give an account of their doings. Those who look down from the housetop must do that.

But, above all things, the historian must get out of his own age into the time in which he is writing. Imagination is as much needed for the historian as the poet. You may combine bits of books with other bits of books, and so make some new combinations, and this may be done accurately, and, in general, much of the subordinate preparation for history may be accomplished without any great effort of imagination. But to write history in any large sense of the words, you must be able to comprehend other times. You must know that there is a right and wrong which is not your right and wrong, but yet stands upon the right and wrong of all ages and all hearts. You must also appreciate the outward life and colours of the period you write about. Try to think how the men you are telling of would have spent a day, what were their leading ideas, what they cared about. Grasp the body of the time, and give it to us. If not, and these men could look at your history, they would say, "This is all very well; we daresay some of these things did happen; but we were not thinking of these things all day long. It does not represent us."

After enlarging upon this great requisite, imagination,

it seems somewhat prosaic to come down to saying that history requires accuracy. But I think I hear the sighs, and sounds more harsh than sighing, of those who have ever investigated anything, and found by dire experience the deplorable inaccuracy which prevails in the world. And, therefore, I would say to the historian almost as the first suggestion, "Be accurate; do not make false references, do not misstate: and men, if they get no light from you, will not execrate you. You will not stand in the way, and have to be explained and got rid of."

Another most important matter in writing history, and that indeed in which the art lies, is the method of narrating. This is a thing almost beyond rules, like the actual execution in music or painting. A man might have fairness, accuracy, an insight into other times, great knowledge of facts, some power even of arranging them, and yet make a narrative out of it all, so protracted here, so huddled together there, the purpose so buried or confused, that men would agree to acknowledge the merit of the book and leave it unread. There must be a natural line of associations for the narrative to run along. The separate threads of the narrative must be treated separately, and yet the subject not be dealt with sectionally, for that is not the way in which the things occurred. The historian

must, therefore, beware that those divisions of the subject which he makes for our ease and convenience, do not induce him to treat his subject in a flimsy manner. He must not make his story easy where it is not so.

After all, it is not by rule that a great history is to be written. Most thinkers agree that the main object for the historian is to get an insight into the things which he tells of, and then to tell them with the modesty of a man who is in the presence of great events; and must speak about them carefully, simply, and with but little of himself or of his affections thrown into the narration.

5. HOW GOOD WRITERS OF HISTORY SHOULD BE CALLED FORTH, AIDED, AND REWARDED.

Mainly by history being properly read. The direct ways of commanding excellence of any kind are very few, if any. When a state has found out its notable men, it should reward them, and will show its worthiness by its measure and mode of reward. But it cannot purchase them. It may do something in the way of aiding them. In history, for instance, the records of a nation may be discreetly managed, and some of the minor work, therefore, done to the hand

of the historian. But the most likely method to ensure good historians is to have a fit audience for them. And this is a very difficult matter. In works of general literature, the circle of persons capable of judging is large; even in works of science or philosophy, it is considerable: but in history, it is a very confined circle. To the general body of readers, whether the history they read is true or not is in no way perceptible. It is quite as amusing to them when it is told in one way as in another. There is always mischief in error; but in this case the mischief is remote, or seems so. For men of ordinary culture, even if of much intelligence, the difficulty of discerning what is true or false in the histories they read, makes it a matter of the highest duty for those few persons who can give us criticism on historical works, at least to save us from insolent and mendacious carelessness in historical writers, if not by just encouragement to secure for nations some results not altogether unworthy of the great enterprise which the writing of history holds out itself to be. "Hujus enim fidei exempla majorum, vicissitudines rerum, fundamenta prudentiæ civilis, hominum denique nomen et fama commissa sunt." *

* BACON *de Augmentis Scientiarum.*

Ellesmere. Just wait a minute for me, and do not talk about the essay till I come back. I am going for Anster's *Faust*.

Dunsford. What has Ellesmere got in his head?

Milverton. I see. There is a passage where Faust, in his most discontented mood, falls foul of history—in his talk to Wagner, if I am not mistaken.

Dunsford. How beautiful it is this evening! Look at that yellow-green near the sunset:

Milverton. The very words that Coleridge uses. I always think of them when I see that tint.

Dunsford. I daresay his words were in my mind, but I have forgotten what you allude to.

Milverton.

"O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow-green:
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
Yon crescent Moon as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel how beautiful they are."

Dunsford. Admirable! In the *Ode to Dejection*, is it not?—where, too, there are those lines,

"O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live."

Milverton. But here comes Ellesmere with trium-

phant look. You look as jovial, my dear Ellesmere, as if you were a Bentley that had found out a false quantity in a Boyle.

Ellesmere. Listen and perpend, my historical friends

> "To us, my friend, the times that are gone by
> Are a mysterious book, sealed with seven seals:
> That which you call the spirit of ages past
> Is but, in truth, the spirit of some few authors
> In which those ages are beheld reflected,
> With what distortion strange heaven only know
> Oh! often, what a toilsome thing it is
> This study of thine—at the first glance we fly it
> A mass of things confusedly heaped together;
> A lumber-room of dusty documents,
> Furnished with all approved court-precedents,
> And old traditional maxims! History!
> Facts dramatised say rather—action—plot—
> Sentiment, everything the writer's own,
> As it best fits the web-work of his story,
> With here and there a solitary fact
> Of consequence, by those grave chroniclers,
> Pointed with many a moral apophthegm,
> And wise old saws, learned at the puppet-shows."

Milverton. Yes; admirable lines: they describe to the life the very faults we have been considering as the faults of badly-written histories. I do not see that they do much more.

Ellesmere.

> "To us, my friend, the times that are gone by
> Are a mysterious book"——

Milverton. Those two first lines are the full expression of Faust's discontent—unmeasured as in the presence of a weak man who could not check him. But, if you

come to look at the matter closely, you will see that the time present is also in some sense a sealed book to us. Men that we live with daily we often think as little of as we do of Julius Cæsar I was going to say—but we know much less of them than of him.

Ellesmere. I did not mean to say that Faust spoke my sentiments about history in general. Still there are periods of history which we have very few authors to tell us about, and I daresay in some of those cases the colouring of their particular minds gives us a false idea of the whole age they lived in.

Dunsford. This may have happened, certainly.

Milverton. We must be careful not to expect too much from the history of past ages, as a means of understanding the present age. There is something wanted besides the preceding history to understand each age. Each individual life may have a problem of its own, which all other biography, accurately set down for us, might not enable us to work out. So of each age. It has a something in it not known before, and tends to a result which is not down in any books.

Dunsford. Yet history must be of greatest use in discerning this tendency.

Ellesmere. Yes; but the Wagner sort of pedant would get entangled in his round of history—in his historical resemblances.

Dunsford. Now, Milverton, if you were called upon to say what are the peculiar characteristics of this age, what should you say?

Ellesmere. One of Dunsford's questions this, requiring a stout quarto volume with notes in answer.

Milverton. I would rather wait till I was called upon. I am apt to feel, after I have left off describing the character of any individual man, as if I had only just begun. And I do not see the extent of discourse that would be needful in attempting to give the characteristics of an age.

Ellesmere. I think you are prudent to avoid answering Dunsford's question. For my own part, I should prefer giving an account of the age we live in after we have come to the end of it—in the true historical fashion. And so, Dunsford, you must wait for my notions.

Dunsford. I am afraid, Milverton, if you were to write history, you would never make up your mind to condemn anybody.

Milverton. I hope I should not be so inconclusive. I certainly do dislike to see any character, whether of a living or a dead person, disposed of in a summary way.

Ellesmere. For once I will come to the rescue of Milverton. I really do not see that a man's belief in the extent and variety of human character, and in the difficulty of appreciating the circumstances of life, should prevent him from writing history—from coming to some conclusions. Of course such a man is not likely to write a long course of history; but that I hold has been a frequent error in historians—that they have taken up subjects too large for them.

Milverton. If there is as much to be said about men's character and conduct as I think there mostly is, why should we be content with shallow views of them? Take the outward form of these hills and valleys before us. When we have seen them a few times, we think we know

them, but are quite mistaken. Approaching from another quarter, it is almost new ground to us. It is a long time before you master the outward form and semblance of any small piece of country that has much life and diversity in it. I often think of this, applying it to our little knowledge of men. Now look there a moment: you see that house: close behind it is apparently a barren tract. In reality there is nothing of the kind there. A fertile valley with a great river in it, as you know, is between that house and the moors. But the plane of those moors and of the house is coincident from our present point of view. Had we not, as educated men, some distrust of the conclusions of our senses, we should be ready to swear that there was a lonely house on the border of the moors. It is the same in judging of men. We see a man connected with a train of action which is really not near him, absolutely foreign to him perhaps, but in our eyes that is what he is always connected with. If there were not a being who understands us immeasurably better than other men can, immeasurably better than we do ourselves, we should be badly off.

Such precautionary thoughts as these must be useful, I contend. They need not make us indifferent to character, or prevent us from forming judgments where we must form them, but they show us what a wide thing we are talking about when we are judging the life and nature of a man.

Ellesmere. I am sure, Dunsford, you are already convinced: you seldom want more than a slight pretext for going over to the charitable side of things. You are only afraid of not dealing stoutly enough with bad things

and people. Do not be afraid though. As long as you have me to abuse, you will say many unjust things against me, you know, so that you may waste yourself in good thoughts about the rest of the world, past and present. Do you know the lawyer's story I had in my mind then? "Many times when I have had a good case," he said, "I have failed; but then I have often succeeded with bad cases. And so justice is done."

Milverton. To return to the subject. It is not a sort of equalizing want of thought about men that I desire; only not to be rash in a matter that requires all our care and prudence.

Dunsford. Well, I believe I am won over. But now to another point. I think, Milverton, that you have said hardly anything about the use of history as an incentive to good deeds and a discouragement to evil ones.

Milverton. I ought to have done so. Bolingbroke gives in his *Letters on History*, talking of this point, a passage from Tacitus, "Præcipuum munus annalium"—can you go on with it, Dunsford?

Dunsford. Yes, I think I can. It is a passage I have often seen quoted. "Præcipuum munus annalium, reor, ne virtutes sileantur; utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamiâ metus sit."

Ellesmere. Well done; Dunsford may have invented it though, for aught that we know, Milverton, and be passing himself off upon us for Tacitus.

Milverton. Then Bolingbroke goes on to say (I wish I could give you his own flowing words), that the great duty of history is to form a tribunal like that amongst

the Egyptians which Diodorus tells of, where both common men and princes were tried after their deaths, and received appropriate honour or disgrace. The sentence was pronounced, he says, too late to correct or to recompense; but it was pronounced in time to render examples of general instruction to mankind. Now, what I was going to remark upon this is, that Bolingbroke understates his case. History well written is a present correction, and a foretaste of recompence, to the man who is now struggling with difficulties and temptations, now overcast by calumny and cloudy misrepresentations.

Ellesmere. Yes; many a man makes an appeal to posterity which will never come before the court; but if there were no such court of appeal——

Milverton. A man's conviction that justice will be done to him in history is a secondary motive, and not one which, of itself, will compel him to do just and great things; but, at any rate, it forms one of the benefits that flow from history, and it becomes stronger as histories are better written. Much may be said against care for fame; much also against care for present repute. There is a diviner impulse than either at the doing of any actions that are much worth doing. As a correction, however, this anticipation of the judgment of history may really be very powerful. It is a great enlightenment of conscience to read the opinions of men on deeds similar to those we are engaged in or meditating.

Dunsford. I think Bolingbroke's idea, which I imagine was more general than yours, is more important: namely, that this judicial proceeding, mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, gave significant lessons to all people, no

to those who had any chance of having their names in history.

Milverton. Certainly : for this is one of Bolingbroke's chief points, if I recollect rightly.

Ellesmere. Our conversations are much better things than your essays, Milverton.

Milverton. Of course, I am bound to say so : but what made you think of that now ?

Ellesmere. Why I was thinking how in talk we can know exactly where we agree or differ. But I never like to interrupt the essay. I never know when it would come to an end if I did. And so it swims on like a sermon, having all its own way : one cannot put in an awkward question in a weak part, and get things looked at in various ways.

Dunsford. I suppose, then, Ellesmere, you would like to interrupt sermons.

Ellesmere. Why, yes, sometimes—do not throw sticks at me, Dunsford.

Dunsford. Well, it is absurd to be angry with you ; because if you long to interrupt Milverton with his cautious perhapses and probablys, of course you will be impatient with discourses which do, to a certain extent, assume that the preacher and the hearers are in unison upon great matters.

Ellesmere. I am afraid to say anything about sermons, for fear of the argumentum baculinum from Dunsford ; but many essay writers, like Milverton, delight to wind up their paragraphs with complete little aphorisms—[redacted]tting up something certainly, but shutting out some- I could generally pause upon them a little.

Milverton. Of course one may err, Ellesmere, in too much aphorising as in too much of anything. But your argument goes against all expression of opinion, which must be incomplete, especially when dealing with matters that cannot be circumscribed by exact definitions. Otherwise, a code of wisdom might be made which the fool might apply as well as the wisest man. Even the best proverb, though often the expression of the widest experience in the choicest language, can be thoroughly misapplied. It cannot embrace the whole of the subject, and apply in all cases like a mathematical formula. Its wisdom lies in the ear of the hearer.

Ellesmere. Well, I do not know that there is anything more to say about the essay. I suppose you are aware, Dunsford, that Milverton does not intend to give us any more essays for some time. He is distressing his mind about some facts which he wants to ascertain before he will read any more to us. I imagine we are to have something historical next.

Milverton. Something in which historical records are useful.

Ellesmere. Really it is wonderful to see how beautifully human nature accommodates itself to anything, even to the listening to essays. I shall miss them.

Milverton. You may miss the talk before and after.

Ellesmere. Well, there is no knowing how much of that is provoked (provoked is a good word, is it not?) by the essays.

Dunsford. Then, for the present, we have
end of our readings

Milverton. Yes ; but I trust at no distant time to have something more to try your critical powers and patience upon. I hope that that old tower will yet see us meet together here on many a sunny day, discussing various things in friendly council.

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

BOOK II.

"IT is good, in *Discourse*, and Speech of Conversation, to vary, and intermingle Speech of the present Occasion with Arguments; Tales with Reasons; Asking of Questions with Telling of Opinions; and Jest with Earnest; For it is a dull Thing to Tire, and as we say now, to Jade, anything too far."—BACON: *Essay of Discourse.*

CHAPTER I.

I AM again enabled to give some account of the readings and conversations at Worth-Ashton during another summer.

I need not say much in the way of introduction, having before described our friendly council and the place of our meeting. There was but little alteration in the latter, except that Milverton had put up a sun-dial in the centre of the lawn, with the motto, "*Horas non numero nisi serenas*," which, I remember, gave occasion to Ellesmere to say, that for men the dial was either totally useless or utterly false. The only change about us was that the animal part of our audience had greatly increased; for Milverton took much pleasure in observing the ways of animals, and Ellesmere, like some other great lawyers of past and present days, was very fond of live creatures of all kinds,—men, women, and children excepted, as I used to tell him. The most extraordinary packages,

marked "with great care," and given into the especial custody of railway guards, used to come down from time to time, containing purchases made by Ellesmere at Hungerford Market in his walks home from Westminster to his chambers. There was a Newfoundland puppy of remarkable sagacity, which already had the upper hand of Rollo; then there were pigeons, guinea-pigs, a jackdaw, and a gorgeous peacock that took his station on the low wall bounding the lawn, and displayed his imperial self to the admiration of all beholders. There were curious fowls of various kinds, and last, though not the least favoured, a hedgehog which Ellesmere had sent (as if we could not find plenty of them in the country), and which he called "his learned friend," and the rest of the family called Snoozelem. Milverton received all these presents with wonderful equanimity; and Ellesmere thus emboldened, was now threatening to send down a raven whenever he could meet with one of sufficient intelligence to be worthy of the party.

The human part of our friendly council seemed to me more worn and altered than one expects to find people in the course of a year. At least I thought so of the young men (young men I am always calling them, though I suppose nobody else would); and I found afterwards that they thought the same of me.

The winter of 1846 and the spring of 1847 will long be remembered. The famine in Ireland and the distress here had pressed on the minds of all men who had to deal with it or to think about it, either publicly or privately. In our own district, we had suffered much privation in a quiet way, and the whole minds of those who could do so had been given to meet it. It was the same, I suppose, with most people who had either property, or office of any kind, lay or clerical, bringing upon them the additional responsibility which such times induce. The general distress and difficulty had, I suspect, weighed much even upon Ellesmere, though, if you had asked him the question, he would have declared that he neither respected, liked, nor cared for, the public; and that he left all such notions to demagogues and philanthropists, vowing that he belonged as little to the one of these classes as to the other.

Our first meeting was on a fine afternoon (a Saturday) exactly at the old place on the lawn where we had broken up our last friendly council of the preceding year. It was the first day this summer that Ellesmere had been able to come, and Milverton had taken care to give me due notice of our friend's coming. I found them already seated. Ellesmere really looked pleased to see me.

Ellesmere. Well, my dear Dunsford, I hope you are glad to see me again, and that you will give me better welcome than you have counselled Milverton, I hear, to give to some of the creatures with which I have enriched his lawn and farmyard, and enlivened your country dulness. Love me, not only love my dog, but my pig, my guinea-pig, that is to say, my pigeons, and my hedgehog. A London pigeon is very good society for you country people: it could tell you a great deal, perhaps, about the prices of stock it had carried at various times, or the way of living at St. Giles's. I have a great mind to choose some nice animals for your place—a couple of young wolves now would do charmingly for the vicarage.

Dunsford. No, come yourself, and bring the whole of your bar with you instead: I had rather take the chance of that than of the animals you would be kind enough to provide for me.

Ellesmere. Well, well, I will be merciful if you promise not to prejudice Milverton against my pets. But we must not talk any more just now. Let us have our reading. I must be off at six o'clock on Monday, so we must have the reading this afternoon. Now, Milverton, what is it to be? Something, I suppose, as novel and refreshing as your first essay of last summer. There is no end to your audacity in the choice of hackneyed subjects. I think you take a pride in it.

Milverton. No, indeed; but they do not appear hackneyed to me. However, I am not going to inflict any hackneyed subject upon you now. It is to be an essay on Reading. I will begin at once.

Hereupon Milverton read to us the following essay.

READING

As the world grows older and as civilization advances, there is likely to be more and more time given to reading. In several parts of the earth where mankind are most active, and where the proportion of those who need to labour by their hands is less than in other countries, and likely to go on becoming less, the climate is such as to confine, if it does not repress, out-of-door amusements: and in all climates, for the lovers of ease, the delicate in health, the reserved, the fastidious, and the musing, books are amongst the chief sources of delight, and such as will more probably intrench upon other joys and occupations than give way to them.

Notwithstanding this, the ethics of study, if I may use such a phrase, have been little considered; and those pursuits over which we might have more efficient control than most others, are left to chance as regards their origin, their conduct, and their end.

It appears to me remarkable that this subject should have been so little touched upon. Other subjects which are akin to it, but yet very different,

have been largely investigated. But you will not find in treatises upon education, upon professions, or upon general knowledge of life, any connected considerations with regard to the ethics and methods of private study. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* is treated as a book belonging to the learned; and, besides, it deals with universals rather than with particulars: indicates the sluggishness, the hindrances, and the course of the main rivers of knowledge; not busying itself with the local fortunes of small streams, retired rivulets, and quiet pools, without which, however, these main rivers would float down no argosie towards the sea of time.

Gibbon says, "After a certain age, the new publications of merit are the sole food of the many." A sarcastic person would perhaps remark, that the words "of merit" might be omitted without injury to the truth of the sentence. But that would be too severe; for the publications of merit do mostly obtain some hearing in their own day, though a very disproportionate one to what they should have; as it is exceedingly difficult, even for highly-cultivated persons, to make good selection of the nascent fruits and flowers of literature amidst the rank herbage of the day.

Before entering upon the mode of managing study,

or perhaps I ought to use the word reading, instead of study (for it would be quite wrong to suppose that the following remarks apply to professed students only), it would be well to see what does really happen in life as regards the intellectual cultivation of most grown-up people. I ask them, Is it not mainly dependent upon chance? The professional man, wearied with the cares and labours of his office or employment, when he comes home, takes up whatever book may happen to be the reading of his wife, or mother, or daughters: and they—for women are often educated in a way to avoid method and intellectual strength of any kind—are probably contented with what the circulating library affords, and read according to the merest rumour and fashion of the present hour. Again, what is called light literature (how it has obtained or maintained that name is surprising), criticisms, scraps, tales, and the like, is nearly the sole intellectual food of many intelligent persons. Now, without undervaluing this kind of literature, which, improved as it would be if addressed to a class of persons who were wont to read with wisdom and method, would be very serviceable to those persons; we cannot say but that to make such literature the staple of the mind is unworthy, and frivolous in the extreme.

I believe, however, that many persons are aware how indifferently they are spending their time in the way they read at present; and I shall not labour any more at this part of the subject, but come at once to what appears to me the remedy for the evil; which is, that every man and every woman who can read at all should adopt some definite purpose in their reading—should take something for the main stem and trunk of their culture, whence branches might grow out in all directions seeking light and air for the parent tree, which it is hoped might end in becoming something useful and ornamental, and which, at any rate, all along will have had life and growth in it.

I do not think that this is too great a task for the humblest reader. At the same time I am not prepared to show how this purpose may be secured in all cases, which must be left to disposition, to what we call chance, to peculiar facilities of any kind afforded to the reader in any one direction. It is so in the choice of a career in life, which is not always determined by a rigid and wise choice, made at once and fully persevered in; but, on the contrary, there may be many false starts, and, occasionally, abrupt changes; still there is such a thing for each man as a career which might be pursued with some method by him, and which would lead to what is

called worldly success. So, in reading, it would be folly to attempt to lay down some process by which every man might ensure a main course of study for himself; but only let him have a just fear of desultory pursuits, and a wish for mental cultivation, and he may hope at some time or other to discern what it is fittest for him to do. And if he does not, but pursues anything with method, there will be some reward for him, if not the highest.

If we consider what are the objects men pursue, when conscious of any object at all, in reading, they are these: amusement, instruction, a wish to appear well in society, and a desire to pass away time. Now even the lowest of these objects is facilitated by reading with method. The keenness of pursuit thus engendered enriches the most trifling gain, takes away the sense of dulness in details, and gives an interest to what would, otherwise, be most repugnant. No one who has never known the eager joy of some intellectual pursuit can understand the full pleasure of reading.

In considering the present subject, the advantage to the world in general of many persons being really versed in various subjects cannot be passed by. And were reading wisely undertaken, much more method

and order would be applied to the consideration of the immediate business of the world; and there would be men who might form something of a wise public with regard to the current questions of the day, such as railways, politics, finance, and the condition of Ireland.

It must not be supposed that this choice and maintenance of one or more subjects of study must necessarily lead to pedantry or narrowness of mind. The Arts are sisters; Languages are close kindred; Sciences are fellow-workmen: almost every branch of human knowledge is immediately connected with biography; biography falls into history, which, after drawing into itself various minor streams, such as geography, jurisprudence, political and social economy, issues forth upon the still deeper waters of general philosophy. There are very few, if any, vacant spaces between various kinds of knowledge: any track in the forest, steadfastly pursued, leads into one of the great highways; just as you often find, in considering the story of any little island, that you are perpetually brought back into the general history of the world, and that this small rocky place has partaken the fate of mighty thrones and distant empires. In short, all things are so connected together, that a man who knows one subject well, cannot, if he would,

fail to have acquired much besides: and that man will not be likely to keep fewer pearls who has a string to put them on, than he who picks them up and throws them together without method. This, however, is a very poor metaphor to represent the matter; for what I would aim at producing not merely holds together what is gained, but has vitality in itself, is always growing. And anybody will confirm this who, in his own case, has had any branch of study or human affairs to work upon: for he must have observed how all he meets seems to work in with, and assimilate itself to, his own peculiar subject. During his lonely walks, or in society, or in action, it seems as if this one pursuit were something almost independent of himself, always on the watch, and claiming its share in whatever is going on.

Again, by recommending some choice of subject and method in the pursuit of it, I do not wish to be held to a narrow interpretation of that word "subject." For example, I can imagine a man saying, I do not care particularly to investigate this or that question in history; I am not going to pursue any branch of science; but I have a desire to know what the most renowned men have written: I will see what the twenty or thirty great poets have said; what in various ages has appeared the best expression of

the things nearest to the heart and fancy of man. A person of more adventure and more time might seek to include the greatest writers in morals or history. There are not so many of them. If a man were to read a hundred great authors, he would, I suspect, have heard what mankind has yet had to say upon most things. I am aware of the culture that would be required for such an enterprise; but I merely give it as an instance of what may justly come under the head of the pursuit of one subject, as I mean it, and which certainly would not be called a narrow purpose.

There is another view of reading which, though it is obvious enough, is seldom taken, I imagine, or at least acted upon; and that is, that in the course of our reading we should lay up in our minds a store of goodly thoughts in well-wrought words, which should be a living treasure of knowledge always with us, and from which, at various times and amidst all the shifting of circumstances, we might be sure of drawing some comfort, guidance, and sympathy. We see this with regard to the sacred writings. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" But there is a similar comfort on a lower level to be obtained from other sources than sacred ones. In any work that is worth carefully reading, there is

generally something that is worth remembering accurately. A man whose mind is enriched with the best sayings of his own country, is a more independent man, walks the streets in a town, or the lanes in the country, with far more delight than he otherwise would have, and is taught by wise observers of man and nature to examine for himself. Sancho Panza with his proverbs is a great deal better than he would have been without them: and I contend that a man has something in himself to meet troubles and difficulties, small or great, who has stored in his mind some of the best things which have been said about troubles and difficulties. Moreover, the loneliness of sorrow is thereby diminished.

It need not be feared that a man whose memory is rich in such resources will become a quoting pedant. Often the sayings which are dearest to our hearts are least frequent on our lips; and those great ideas which cheer men in their direst struggles are not things which they are likely to inflict by frequent repetition upon those they live with. There is a certain reticence with us as regards anything we deeply love.

I have not hitherto spoken of the indirect advantage of methodical reading in the culture of the mind.

One of the dangers supposed to be incident upon a life of study is, that purpose and decisiveness are worn away. Not, as I contend, upon a life of study, such as it ought to be. For, pursued methodically, there must be some, and not a little, of the decision, resistance, and tenacity of pursuit which create, or further, greatness of character in action. Though, as I have said, there are times of keen delight to a man who is engaged in any distinct pursuit, there are also moments of weariness, vexation, and vacillation, which will try the mettle in him, and see whether he is worthy to understand and master anything. For this you may observe, that in all times and all nations, sacrifice is needed. The savage Indian who was to obtain any insight into the future had to starve for it for a certain time. Even the fancy of this power was not to be gained without paying for it. And was anything real ever gained without sacrifice of some kind?

There is a very refined use which reading might be put to; namely, to counteract the particular evils and temptations of our callings, the original imperfections of our characters, the tendencies of our age, or of our own time of life. Those, for instance, who are versed in dull, crabbed work all day, of a kind which is always exercising the logical faculty and demanding minute,

not to say vexatious criticism, would, during their leisure, do wisely to expatiate in writings of a large and imaginative nature. These, however, are often the persons who particularly avoid poetry and works of imagination, whereas they ought, perhaps, to cultivate them most. For it should be one of the frequent objects of every man who cares for the culture of his whole being, to give some exercise to those faculties which are not demanded by his daily occupations, and not encouraged by his disposition.

Hitherto the inducements I have brought forward for more fixedness of pursuit and soundness of method in reading have been, many of them, comparatively speaking, worldly and slight ones. But there are others, which, if well considered, might alone suffice to change at once any habit of thoughtless and purposeless reading. We suppose that we carry our moral nature to another world; why not our intellectual nature?—further, why not our acquirements? Is it probable that a man who has scorned here all advantages for commune with the works of God is at once to be enlightened as if he had done his duty to the intelligence within him or about him? It may be noticed that, as far as we can discern, the same physical laws govern the most distant parts of creation as those which prevail here. Moreover, what we call

Nature, or Providence, is thrifty as well as liberal—has apparently given to man no more faculty than he fully needs. May not a similar divine frugality—perhaps an essential element for the furtherance of life and the development of energy—pervade creation? These, however, are very serious topics, and I am afraid of being presumptuous in talking about them. But we must remember that there may be presumption in making too little, as well as in making too much, of knowledge. Added to which—and here I am in much less fear of what I say—I have no doubt that sound intellectual culture is in brotherhood with the best moral culture. Accuracy, for instance, is the prose of truth. And there is a humility which is one of the best things for the mind as well as the soul of man, and may come through either inlet.

At any rate, we cannot be wrong, whether we are professed students, or soldiers, or men of the world, or whatever we are, in endeavouring to make the time we give to books a time not spent unprofitably to ourselves and our fellow-creatures; and this will never be the case if we are the victims of chance in what we take up to read; if we vacillate for ever in our studies, or if we never look for anything in them but the ease of the present moment, or the gratification of getting rid of it insensibly.

Ellesmere. I like that essay.

Dunsford. So do I.

Milverton. I knew you would, because you have no need of the advice given in it, both of you being careful readers, and choice in what you read. Indeed Ellesmere carries this to an excess, and so misses reading some of the best works of the day.

Ellesmere. Yes ; but what trash have I not avoided reading? How many works have I escaped the knowledge of, which you would give a great deal to forget? And at least, Milverton, I always read my friends' books, whether they are treatises on labour, tragedies, or the densest political economy.

But to pass from me and my doings to the subject before us. The most important part of it to my mind is one which you have but lightly alluded to: I mean the advantage which would arise if the common affairs of the world were studied methodically. As it is, men read a clever article in a newspaper or review, or enter into an animated conversation about some common topic of the day, and then they wait for another clever article or review, or another chance conversation, not bringing any study to bear upon the subject meanwhile. Hence opinions on public affairs are formed by chance; and statesmen and legislators have a much less enlightened public to appeal to than they might have.

Milverton. Very true: and a much less enlightened circle to choose their official men from. An improvement, however, in this respect, is but one of the advantages which would arise from more methodical reading. If there were even but a small part of the public that

cared for its own education, many of the works of history which have been addressed to the world would never have been written so carelessly, or would at once have been found out.

Dunsford. Then again, in science, the result of anything like methodical reading amongst a large number of persons might carry us forward with greatly accelerated rapidity.

When you mention the serious considerations, Milverton, which might induce more wisdom in reading, you should not omit to point out that each man has but a certain limited portion of time and energy in this world; and surely the knowledge of this fact ought to make us careful in what we give our attention to. We cannot afford to throw it away.

Milverton. Men seldom feel as if they were bounded as to time; they think they can afford to throw away a great deal of that commodity, thus showing unconsciously even in their trifling, the sense that they have of their immortality.

Ellesmere. There is one thing, Milverton, you seem to me to have omitted entirely; namely, that this methodical reading you recommend would ensure some digestion of what is read—would necessitate some thinking. You recollect what Hobbes used to say, "that if he had read as many books as other men, he should have been as ignorant as they," clearly implying that reading is sometimes an ingenious device for avoiding thought.

Milverton. Well, I think you might have inferred as much from my essay.

Dunsford. You are quite right, Milverton, in suggest-

ing that we should commit to memory some part of what we like in reading. Now, this very day, as I was coming across the common, perhaps it was that I walked with more difficulty than usual, I bethought me that I was rapidly descending into old age, and the thought was not a pleasant one. It set me, however, thinking of Cicero's *De Senectute*, and then to repeating large portions of that beautiful and comforting treatise, not failing at the same time to remember what might have been added by a Christian. Before I reached your house I had forgotten my own little trouble about old age, and was deep in Cicero.

Ellesmere. You see, also, Milverton, that another of your theories holds good in this case, for Dunsford does not attempt to quote upon us his passages of Cicero; whether from the passages being too dear to him to quote, or that he believes, in which he would not be far out, that some of us would be unable to construe them, I leave you to guess.

Milverton. Do not you both agree with me in this part where I say that when a man has some object in study, all things seem to fall in with it?

Ellesmere. Yes, they do wonderfully.

Milverton. I found a curious instance of that the other day. It is in the Manuscripts of Las Casas, in which, giving an account of his conversion to the cause of the Indians, he says of himself, "From the first hour that he (Las Casas) began to dispel the clouds of that ignorance (his former opinion in favour of Indian slavery), he never read in Latin or Spanish any book, and the books that he read in forty-four years were infinite in number,

in which he did not find either reason or authority to prove and corroborate the justice which those Indian nations had on their side, and to condemn the injustice and evils and injuries which have been done to them." * I copied out the passage, because I thought it would interest you.

Ellesmere. Yes; I can imagine that the good father found in "the sainted Thomas," for I suppose that was *the* book of those days, many a sentence which seemed written purposely for the behoof of the Indians.

Dunsford. I think, Milverton, you might have given us some noble quotations from Bacon or Cicero about the grandeur and the comfort of study.

Milverton. No: if I had given you anything it would have been from a more unfrequented source; and if you like, I will do so now (here Milverton called to his servant and requested him to bring Hazlitt's *Lectures on the Elizabethan Writers*).

Ellesmere. What a learned young man that servant of yours is! What a profound acquaintance he seems to have with the outsides of books, which, after all, is the safest and the pleasantest kind of book-knowledge.

Milverton. I think you might extend your commendation to a knowledge of the title-pages,—but here he

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* "Desde la primera hora que comenzó á deshechar las tinieblas de aquella ignorancia nunca leyó en Libro de latin ó de romance, *que fuéron en cuarenta y cuatro años infinitos*, en que no hallase ó razon ó autoridad para probar y corroborar la Justicia de aquestas Indianas Gentes, y para condenacion de las injusticias que se les han hecho y males y daños."

comes with the book. I will read you the passage I alluded to.

"They (books) are the nearest to our thoughts; they wind into the heart; the poet's verse slides into the current of our blood. We read them when young, we remember them when old. We read there of what has happened to others; we feel that it has happened to ourselves. They are to be had everywhere cheap and good. We breathe but the air of books: we owe everything to their authors, on this side barbarism; and we pay them easily with contempt while living, and with an epitaph when dead! Michael Angelo is beyond the Alps; Mrs. Siddons has left the stage and us to mourn her loss. Were it not so, there are neither picture-galleries nor theatres-royal on Salisbury Plain, where I write this; but here, even here, with a few old authors, I can manage to get through the summer or the winter months without ever knowing what it is to feel ennui. They sit with me at breakfast; they walk out with me before dinner. After a long walk through unfrequented tracks, after starting the hare from the fern, or hearing the wing of the raven rustling above my head, or being greeted by the woodman's stern 'good night,' as he strikes into his narrow homeward path, I can 'take mine ease at mine inn,' beside the blazing hearth, and shake hands with Signor Orlando Friscobaldo, as the oldest acquaintance I have. Ben Jonson, learned Chapman, Master Webster, and Master Heywood, are there; and, seated round, discourse the silent hours away. Shakspeare is there himself, not in Cibber's manager's coat. Spenser is hardly yet returned from a ramble through the woods, or is concealed behind

a group of nymphs, fauns, and satyrs. Milton lies on the table, as on an altar, never taken up or laid down without reverence. Lyly's *Endymion* sleeps with the moon, that shines in at the window; and a breath of wind stirring up at a distance seems a sigh from the tree under which he grew old. Faustus disputes in one corner of the room with fiendish faces, and reasons of divine astrology. Bellafront soothes Matheo. Vittoria triumphs over her judges, and old Chapman repeats one of the hymns of Homer in his own fine translation! I should have no objection to pass my life in this manner out of the world, not thinking of it, nor it of me; neither abused by my enemies, nor defended by my friends; careless of the future, but sometimes dreaming of the past, which might as well be forgotten."

Ellesmere. A great many of the gentlemen alluded to by Hazlitt are quite unknown to me, but he has brought out his own feelings so admirably that I do not need to know the particular instances.

Here it was necessary that I should return home, and I accordingly took leave of my friends after arranging to have another meeting soon.

CHAPTER II.

THE next time I came over to Worth-Ashton to meet Ellesmere and to hear a chapter read, it was a mild dull day: and as we had long been looking out for such a day to go upon the downs, we resolved to take this opportunity; so, after Milverton had let the dogs loose, we all sallied forth It was our intention to choose for our place of reading some tumuli which are at no great distance from Worth-Ashton. We had a good deal of conversation in the course of our walk, which Milverton thus began :—

Milverton. I have had such trouble to let that dog loose. He seemed to know that we were going out upon the downs, which he greatly approves of; and he was so impatient that I could not get at his collar to undo it. I thought all the time how like I was to Pope Pius the Ninth, who must have much the same difficulty in keeping his Italians quiet enough for him to free them.

Ellesmere. That is true, I daresay; but I do not know enough of Italian politics to pronounce anything about them. However, I can see it is a grand thing to have a Pope "of some mark and likelihood" in our times. It gives new life to politics.

Milverton. And not to politics only.

Ellesmere. Well, we shall see. These are matters we shall hear much of in our time. Meanwhile, let us drink in some of this delightful air. Look at that ungainly puppy trying to catch the thistledown as it steals up the hill. What is it? Oh! I see; a seed in the middle and this feathery stuff round it, so that the seed may be carried hither and thither. Not unlike many a book—one idea in it, and some airy stuff round it, and so it floats along merrily enough.

Milverton. Carry out the simile a little further, my critical friend. What animal is it that feeds upon the parent of the thistledown? Is it a little creature that devours the authors of the books?

Dunsford. I think, Ellesmere, you have not gained much by your attack upon Milverton's tribe.

Ellesmere. I wonder, now, are authors fonder of their books than painters of their pictures?

Milverton. I suspect it is not a very lasting fondness, even when it is a fondness in either case. But there is a great difference between the two things.

Ellesmere. Yes; for in the picture you have the thing actually made by its author, which he touched, which was for a long time in his presence. Let us think of that when we look at a great picture. It is a relic of the great artist. It was one of his household gods for a time.

Milverton. I often think what interest there is in a picture quite independent of its subject, or its merit, or its author. I mean the interest belonging to the history of it, as a work of some one man's labour. I can imagine he was so joyous in the beginning of it: the whole work

was already done, perhaps, in his mind, where the colours are easily laid on, while the canvas yet was white. Then there were the early sketches. He finds the idea is not so easy after all to put on canvas. At last a beginning is made; and then the work proceeds for a time rapidly. How often he draws back from the canvas, approaches it again, looks at it fondly yet wistfully, as a watching mother at a sick child. He is interrupted, tries to be courteous or kind, as the occasion requires, but is delighted when the door closes and leaves him alone with the only creature whose presence he cares much for just now. All day long his picture is with him in the background of his mind. He goes out: the bright colours in the shops, the lines of buildings, little children on the door-steps, all show him something; and when he goes back, he rushes into his painting-room to expend his fresh vigour and his new insight upon the work of his heart. So it goes on. Let us hope that it prospers. Then there comes a time when the completion of the picture is foreseen by him, when there is not much room for more to be made of it, and yet it is not nearly finished. He is a little weary of it. Observe this, Ellesmere, there is the same thing throughout life, in all forms of human endeavour. These times of weariness need watching. But our artist is patient and plods on. The end of the drama approaches, when the picture is to go into a gilt frame, and be varnished, and hung up—like the hero of a novel upon whom a flood of good fortune is let in at last.

Ellesmere. Stop here. Do not let us have the "decline and fall" of the picture; when it comes to be

a target for children, or subsides into the corner of an old curiosity shop.

Milverton. No. Besides it would not be fair to take the unsuccessful pictures only. How many are delicately cared for and tended in lordly galleries, and hear choice words of praise and nice criticism from the lips of the wise and the beautiful, and are the pets of the world. But the history of any picture before it left the artist's studio would be enough, if we could know it all, to interest us greatly, even where the picture was but a poor thing—a wish rather than a deed.

Ellesmere. Let us sit down here.

Dunsford. Yes.

Ellesmere. Get away, Rollo! Did you see that dog nearly upset me, coming to shake hands, as their way is, with his mouth? What was it we were talking about before we sat down? Ah, pictures. I was going to say all the London world now are discussing the designs for the new Houses, and people are very full of suggestions for great historical pictures. There is one comfort, we shall not be troubled with Madonnas. I confess I am wearied with Madonnas. If I were an autocrat I would say, "Let there be no more Madonnas painted: we have had enough of them."

Milverton. At the time the great ones were painted, there was a religious intent in the painter and in those for whom he painted, which prevented their looking at a Madonna as a mere work of art. Hence they were not wearied at the repetition.

Dunsford. There is one sacred subject which seems to me amongst the most touching, if not the most sublime,

that we can imagine. And yet it is not altogether what can be made of it in a picture that I mean. The scene is one for the mind to work out in all its fulness, and soon outstrips whatever even a Rembrandt can give us. It is "the woman taken in adultery." I often picture that scene to myself—the majestic figure of the divine Pardoner: the shrinking, down-cast, shame-burnt woman: the crowd of accusers and of unloving bystanders fading away awestricken at the hideous phantoms of their own guilt. For then, perhaps, before each man rose his own sin, not as it lies compressed in any one human heart, a little thing, but vast, unmeasured, darkening the way before him. Their murders and their adulteries then appeared to those who thought they knew not the words murder and adultery as touching them: nor did they as the world knows them. Here stood the man who had been guilty of many things, but whom guilt had not made tolerant. He vanished in affright. Here was the strict, precise, self-righteous man, whose want of charity suddenly made visible to him was an abyss to look into, which fascinated and appalled him. And he wandered away he knew not whither. Here were those who were *strong*, inasmuch as they had not been tempted: and they saw for a moment their future selves, or what men such as they might come to; and hurried away sick at heart and shuddering, as one belated whom the lightning tells suddenly that he has been walking with heedless unconcern through mountain passes needing by daylight the nicest and the firmest footstep. And then I think I see at the edge of the crowd a young girl who had come, not from malice or ill-will, but with a curious wish to see

something of human suffering. And she too moves away like the rest, but not aghast with horror like them, and yet with sorrow, shame, and wailing, in that she had not pitied more.

We were silent for a time, and resumed our walk in silence, nor do I recollect any more of our conversation till after Milverton had read to us the following essay on giving and taking criticism.

ON GIVING AND TAKING CRITICISM.

I SCARCELY know of anything more valuable to a man than his opinions and his judgments, or of more importance to others. Whether it is that I myself am very slow to form opinions, or that they really are very difficult to attain, they certainly appear to me great acquisitions. Often, like other acquisitions,—houses, lands, honours, children, money,—these opinions are a great care and a great trouble; but still they are acquisitions: and it seems to me that any man who wastes his opinions by injudicious scattering, or by throwing them out before they are complete, is a sad spendthrift. And if he pretends to have opinions and utters remarks that appear like judgments when he has them not, he may remind his

hearers somewhat of a coiner and utterer of false money.

I suppose, however, that many of those who criticise much do not opine or judge, but only talk. There is, too, a flow of criticism with some men, like the poetry of improvisatori, neither good nor altogether bad, having no deep meaning or purpose in it, bearing marks of no correction, being something like the talk of parrots, except that it lacks the force which belongs to repetition.

There are two characteristics which I think may be observed in the conduct of those who form opinions substantially for themselves. These persons are either very reticent about their opinions; for having worked at them, and, perhaps, suffered for them, and knowing, too, how much there is to be said on the other side, it is not play with such people to produce their opinions (they would as soon expose their cherished feelings): or, on the other hand, if they have once expressed their opinions, you are very likely to perceive a constant reference to them, and you find that the holders of opinions thus formed do not soon tire of them. The formers, therefore, of their own opinions are slow to utter and likely to repeat.

Men's criticism has chiefly had for its objects the

appearances of nature and the characters of other men and their doings. When we think what, for centuries, was the criticism upon nature among people fully equal to ourselves; how they pronounced without the slightest experience upon the gravest matters; how they put words for facts, declaring that bodies descended because it was the nature of bodies to descend, or dicta of that kind; it may occur to us how often in questions of social and political life, and the judgment of character, we may be exercising a similar rashness and indiscretion. When you have an opportunity of looking well into any one human character, you may see meanness and generosity, sensuality and abstinence, softness and ferocity, profound dissimulation and extreme imprudence all mixed up in one man. And I have seen in the same character great sensitiveness, lively appreciation of difficulties and defects, and extreme fastidiousness, joined to the utmost tenacity of purpose —a combination like that of a bulldog's head to the shivering delicate body of an Italian greyhound. These strangely intermingled characters are then thrown amidst the ever-varying circumstances of life; and we, the bystanders, having a partial view of the circumstances, and no conception of the original texture of the character, and judging it by an artificial standard

of our own, pronounce opinions, formed, perhaps, in the greatest haste, and in answer to somebody else,—fatal opinions on our fellow-men.

There is one thing which I imagine has much perplexed men in judging of character, and made their judgments often very absurd. I allude to their habit of nice division of qualities and temperaments, about which they talk as if each were a thing by itself, and had not entered into almost indissoluble connection with the rest. For example, I imagine that strength of mind is often accompanied by, perhaps we ought to say absolutely connected with, strength of passions. The critic takes the life and conduct of a man in whom such a combination exists, and talks of him as if he had had originally the sagacity and the force of mind, but that all the passions were acquired; or, *vice versâ*, gives the passions and makes the judgment acquired; or, at any rate, sees no wholeness in the character. A forcible instance of the kind of character I mean occurs to me in the person of one of our greatest kings, Henry the Second. In him extreme sagacity and great nobleness of mind were joined with the utmost violence of passion. In reading the history of his reign, we find him, at whatever part of his dominions his presence is wanted, conducting his affairs with the utmost

ability, with almost ability enough to counteract the evils which his passions had raised against him. In business, in pleasure, in study, he would be foremost. Strange to say, he was one of the most prudent men of his time; and his treaties, especially after conquest, are surprising for their moderation. Then we have an account of him on the floor gnawing straws like a maniac, in excess of uncontrollable passion. Such a man, if he has children, is likely to have a fierce strange brood like himself; and they will not diminish his troubles or fail to call out at all the points of his character. Now what I mean as regards the criticism on such characters, and perhaps on all characters, is that we canvass bit by bit, quality by quality, instead of looking at the whole as a whole. I suspect that what we call Nature is very sparing in giving unqualified good. She lays down a bark of great capacity; soundly and wisely builds it; but then freights it, perhaps, with fierce energies, and leaves it to stormy impulses, which carry it out into the wildest seas: and what the result will be may depend on a very slight balance of favourable and unfavourable endeavours and influences. Extremely foolish criticism is likely to be uttered by those who are looking at the labouring vessel from the land.

The great deficiencies in criticism throughout all

ages have been a deficiency of humility, a lack of charity, and a want of imagination. The absence of humility in critics is something wonderful. The fly on the axle of the chariot in Æsop's fables, though he made a foolish and vain-glorious remark in observing what a dust he raised, was not so absurd as the wren would be, who, perched upon the unconscious eagle, should suppose that he keeps the eagle down, and should talk accordingly. Men who work must expose something to criticism; and the wider and greater their transactions, the more surface there is likely to be exposed. The larger the fortress, the greater the choice of attack. The smaller kind of critics, like ancient Parthians or modern Cossacks, hover on the rear of a great army, transfix a sentinel, surprise an outpost, harass the army's march, afflict its flight; but they rarely determine the campaign. It hardly becomes them to claim the honours of the steady legionary.

I have said that criticism has very frequently lacked imagination as well as charity and humility. In no respect will this combined deficiency be better perceived than in considering the way in which men persist in commenting upon the works of others from their own peculiar ground and point of view. They will not exercise a charitable imagination, and look at

what is done with due regard to the doer's drift and conception. Their own conceits perplex and stultify their judgment.

Of the difference between acting and criticising action, you will be easily convinced if you observe what an immediate change comes over the spirit of those who, having been accustomed to criticise, have suddenly to work in the very vocation which they have been given to criticise. Men called to power from the ranks of opposition afford a well-known instance of this; but lower down in life, in domestic authority for example, the same phenomenon takes place. He who has been wont to pronounce so fluently upon the defects of another's rule and management, finds, when in power himself, what a different thing it is to act and to talk. His rash and heated judgment is all at once sobered by the weight of responsibility.

We may even go further in this argument, and contend that the functions of doing and criticising are not merely different, but oftentimes antagonistic; for you will rarely find that a man given to criticism does much; and, on the other hand, that the man who does much has not outgrown the habit of much criticism—at any rate, of the ill-natured kind. It is here, as elsewhere, that those passions and qualities

which make us injurious or offensive to our neighbour react directly upon ourselves. An ill-tempered man often has everything his own way, and seems very triumphant; but the demon he cherishes tears him, as well as awes other people. So, in criticism, he who worries others, by injurious or needless remarks, ends in tormenting himself by a mean and over-solicitous care about his own thoughts and deeds; and, perhaps, not all the self-inflicted tortures of religious devotees have equalled the misery which men have given themselves up to from remarks of their own about themselves, and imaginary remarks on their conduct by their neighbours.

In speaking of criticism, we must not omit to mention that there is a species of it which may be called needless, as distinguished from that which is intentionally unkind. It is a great mistake to suppose that because words are used logically, and may be sensible enough in themselves, that they may nevertheless not come under the description of folly, and be liable to all that Solomon has said against foolish talk. I believe that more breaches of friendship and love have been created, and more hatred cemented, by needless criticism than by any one other thing. If you find a man who performs most of the relations of life

dutifully, is even kind and affectionate, but who, you discover, is secretly disliked and feared by all his friends and acquaintances, you will often, on further investigation, ascertain that he is one who indulges largely in needless criticism.

Some considerable part of the troubles and perplexities of each man's mind lies in the endurance and digestion of criticism—more, too, perhaps, of the criticism by anticipation which he fancies he hears, or will hear, than from that which is actually addressed to him. Now there are several ways of dealing with any trouble or misfortune. One is, to magnify it. Machiavelli, in his celebrated letter to Vettori, after describing his sordid occupations and the company he keeps (a limekiln man, a butcher, and the landlord of a small country inn), says, "I develop the malignity of my fortune." He thought by magnifying it to overcome it. Then there is the stoical way, to ignore misfortune. Then there is the humorous, in which a man pretends, as it were, not to know his misfortune, or will only look at the droll side of it. Then there is the calm and business-like way of dealing with misfortune—to look at it full in the face, measure it carefully, and see what good is in it, what can be done with it, and how it can be stowed away.

All the above methods may be applied to the endurance of unkind or thoughtless criticism, which, however, is generally attempted to be dealt with as if it were no evil. But making lighter of an evil than it really is does not appear to me the safe way to suppress it. Suppose you have done anything with large expense of labour—written a book which you have really tried to write honestly, built a house, begun to drain a moss, established a business, led an expedition, or, in short, done anything which has cost you thought and toil, abnegation and enterprise of various kinds—which is, indeed, a considerable part of your life; it is no good pretending that hostile and thoughtless criticism upon this work is not a painful thing. Accept it as an unpleasant circumstance; take into fair consideration the injury that it may be. This is far better than saying you do not care at all about such criticism, and yet all the time secretly fretting at it. Several of the works above enumerated depend for their result upon opinion, and it is idle to talk about not caring for opinion in such cases. The plan is to enlighten yourself about the meaning and force of the opinion in question. If it be sound, and you feel it to be sound, profit by it; you have then counteracted some of the injury, and in this solid gain there should be compensation even for mortified vanity.

But often there is no good to be gained from the criticism; it is empty, ill-natured, untrue, and nobody knows that so well as you who have done the work criticised. This criticism is an unwelcome hindrance and an injury. But here, again, what balm there is to be had upon the slightest reflection. This opinion, which annoys you so much, is frequently that of one or few. You will be very cool and indifferent about the whole matter by the time it is rightly judged; I mean, even if it is in your lifetime. Then you are to consider that all men who do anything must endure this depreciation of their efforts. It is the dirt which their chariot wheels throw up. You may then further consider that frequently between the doer and the critic there is a span which cannot be bridged over. It is not wise, however, to let your thoughts go far in this direction, lest they become arrogant. But the main comfort under injurious comments of any kind is to look at them fairly, accept them as an evil, and calculate the extent of the mischief. These injurious comments seldom blacken all creation for you. A humorous friend of mine, who suffered some time ago under a severe article in the first newspaper in the world, tells me that it was a very painful sensation for the first day, and that he thought all eyes were upon him (he being a retired, quiet, fastidious person), but

going into his nursery and finding his children were the same to him as usual, and then walking out with his dogs and observing that they frolicked about him as they were wont to do, he began to discover that there was happily a public very near and dear to him, on which even the articles of *The Times* could make no impression. The next day my poor friend—who, by the way, was firmly convinced that he was right in the matter in controversy—had become quite himself again. Indeed, he snapped his fingers at leading articles, and said he wished people would write more of them against him.

It may be thought that I have hitherto spoken only, or chiefly, of foolish, indiscreet, or restless criticism; and have omitted to point out the merits of criticism when well directed. But I am well aware that there is a criticism which may almost be called a religious criticism; which holds out its warnings when multitudes are mad, and when following a multitude to talk nonsense is much the same thing as following it to do evil. There is also the pious, high-built criticism, which reluctantly points out defects in those works it loves best, and which would be silent if it were too late to be of use. There is the criticism founded upon patient research and studious deliberation,

which, even if it be given somewhat rudely and harshly, cannot but be useful, and which, like the frost, thins away the weeds which, but for its kindly nipping, would occupy the air and food wanted for the young plantation of serviceable timber. There is the loving criticism which explains, elicits, illumes; showing the force and beauty of some great word or deed which, but for the kind care of the critic, might remain a dead letter or an inert fact; teaching the people to understand and to admire what is admirable.

There is the everyday criticism of good handy men, which is but a stepping back to look at their own and others' labours, and is the fair judgment on their joint-work by a worker.

Lastly, there is the silent criticism of example, worth all the rest.

Ellesmere. What a scandalous shame it is (don't look so astonished, Milverton, I am not talking of the essay)—what a scandalous shame it is, I say, that we should use the word puppy as we do. I have been watching our young friend there; up he flies at Rollo's ear, Rollo gives him a shake, tumbles him over, and away he goes rolling down the mound. He waddles up directly, commences his attack again, and is sent about his business in the

same way. But he is not to be daunted. Now what a shame to make such a noble creature's name a term of reproach.

Milverton. Be comforted, Ellesmere; I daresay old dogs, when they have a more than usually tiresome puppy to scold, call it "young man," in their language.

Dunsford. I say, it is a scandalous shame that you two should be talking such nonsense when there is so much to be said about the essay.

Ellesmere. Now, my dear Dunsford, if you think that I have hurried down by the express train this hot day to talk sense and do criticism, you must be undeceived forthwith. Besides, what is the good of listening to essays or sermons, or moral discourses of any kind, without attempting to act in some accordance with them? After receiving this "heavy blow and great discouragement" to inconsiderate criticism in general, would it become me to be blurting out my poor thoughts and picking an essay to pieces which orders me to pick nothing to pieces without good reason, and desires me, the critic (not that there was any need in my particular case), to stand hat in hand before the writer, the maker of any work. For to-day I will be of Hamlet's mind, and consider that even praise may be arrogant.

Dunsford. Where does Hamlet say that?

Ellesmere. He intimates something of the kind when Osric brings the news of the King's wager.

Osric. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—
Hamlet. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence.

Milverton. I am not altogether sorry to be exempt

from Ellesmere's criticism to-day: though, to tell the truth, I rather distrust our friend's sudden modesty, Dunsford.

Ellesmere. You may take it another way if you please. There is the silent criticism of silence, worth all the rest. But if you want to know what I really have been thinking about during the reading, I will tell you; and my thoughts, though you will hardly see how, grew out of the reading in a distant way, and out of thinking where we are and what these mounds contain.

Dunsford. In 1837 there was——

Ellesmere. Yes, yes; I suppose some one has routed into these mounds; but, please, do not tell me about it; I do not want to know. I can imagine that here were huddled together the bodies of brave men and some of their rude implements of war: and other men, as brave mayhap, who fell around here, the kites fed upon; and the army marched on; and there was mourning on this side and rejoicing on that; and men missed their comrades for a few days; and these were at rest. Well, I thought of such things; and then I wondered what they made of life in those ages; and then I returned to present times, and thought of our chief modern men; and you will both be pleased to find that those I thought of were amongst your author and artist tribe.

Dunsford. Well, that is a redeeming point in this vague thinking of yours.

Ellesmere. You know, Milverton, your clan have always received me kindly; and, indeed, I was fortunate enough, when a younger man, to know some of the great people of old. But to come to the substance of what I

was going to say, I thought that these people, though they were excellent company (they ought to be, their knowledge is more extensive and various, and in general better arranged, than that of other men), yet that they were a sad-hearted race—at least many of them were. And then I thought to myself, ought this to be? These men, according to our theory, get nearer to the meaning of many things. Is that meaning a sad one? Is the great "open secret" of the world a grievous thing? You, I know, Dunsford, imagine my thoughts to be a mass of unreasoning and somewhat hopeless scepticism; but I must say, at the risk of gaining some of your good opinion, that I cannot but believe that the nearer we could get to this inner meaning I have been talking of, the more comfort and joy we should find. I venture to suspect that Solomon was melancholy rather than wise when he pronounced that Wisdom is sorrow. But it jars upon one to find that men who seem to know so much do not make a better thing of it themselves. These may be common-place thoughts; but there you have what I was thinking about instead of criticising.

Milverton. Supposing that what you say is a fair statement of facts, there are many ways of accounting for it. The original constitution of men of genius—for it is of such, I suppose, that you are talking—may be unfavourable to joy. Though, after all, I question whether there are any persons who can be so jovial. Well, then, mental toil is the greatest of toil, and naturally undermines that health which we know is a needful element for comfort and joy. Then a man cannot serve two masters; and consequently the worldly relations of men of genius, as

of statesmen absorbed in state affairs, are very apt to become a torment to them. I do not say this as any excuse for the irregularities, as they are called, of men of genius. But it is a fact. Almost any worldly state in which a man can be placed is a hindrance to him if he have other than mere worldly things to do. Poverty, wealth, many duties, or many affairs distract and confuse him. No affairs, no distresses, no ties leave him uneducated in the most important knowledge he can have. Then, again, though this is a difficult and dangerous subject to enter upon, men of genius have been apt to make a sad business of some of their domestic relations. Moreover, there is often a great deal in their ways of going on that provokes disesteem in those around them. They are simple, child-like,—worldly wise and worldly foolish. Their foolishness is understood. They see further than those around them, but it is into a region where the others have no view, and, therefore, do not believe in the country—thinking it entirely cloud-land. While, in the near region, though the former understand that too, and its just place and proportion; yet as it must be all in all to them to be thoroughly managed by them, and as they will not suffer it to be all in all, but rather depreciate it perhaps, they often miss even the proper hold of it. And for all these and many other reasons (for I do not see where we should end if we were to go minutely into this matter), they sooner meet with the imperfections of sympathy, and find out earlier than other men that man is only partially understood, or pitied, or loved, by man; but for the fulness of these things he must go to some far-off country. And here philosophy and experience are

permitted to enter into the track of piety, and have their thoughts too of how good a thing it must be for the soul to be with God.*

Ellesmere. There is something in all this; but of course I did not make my remark with an utter forgetfulness of these things.

Milverton. I meant to begin with the more obvious part of the matter, which, however, ought not to be neglected. Now here is a view that perhaps you have not thought of. You see some great result come from a man's work, and you conclude justly enough that there are power and insight in that man. That is the main thing which is before you in thinking of him. Then you wonder his gifts do not do more. You want them to lift him up altogether. But is it unreasonable to imagine that there may sometimes be proportion in natural gifts—for instance,

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* Talking once with Milverton upon the same subject, he said that train of thought was based on something in Emerson's essay on Love. The following must be the passage :—

"But we are often made to feel that our affections are but tents of a night. Though slowly and with pain, the objects of the affections change, as the objects of thought do. There are moments when the affections rule and absorb the man, and make his happiness dependent on a person or persons. But in health the mind is presently seen again,—its overarching vault, bright with galaxies of immutable lights, and the warm loves and fears that swept over us as clouds, must lose their finite character, and blend with God, to attain their own perfection. But we need not fear that we can lose anything by the progress of the soul. The soul may be trusted to the end. That which is so beautiful and attractive as these relations must be succeeded and supplanted only by what is more beautiful, and so on for ever."

that where there is great sagacity there may be great passions? that, in short, where there are great powers there may be great inherent drawbacks? I am but repeating what I have said in other words in the essay.

Ellesmere. Yes, there is something in this. I think, however, I had in my mind men whose insight had not had much odds to contend against, but still who seem to have progressed into sadness.

Milverton. The traveller may come into a fine country which fills his heart with consolation, if not with joy; but he himself remains, at least for a time, travel-worn, travel-stained, with eyes that have not lost the anxious watching look of one accustomed to lie down at night in peril.

Ellesmere. Oh, I am no match for you if you once get amongst metaphors. It is your trade. A plain man like me, who has to address plain men like Lord Chancellors and judges, cannot ascend with these flights of yours.

Milverton. There are subjects the truth of which can never be so well brought out as by the aid of metaphors. Metaphors give body and circumstance to things which could not be adequately represented if discussed in cold though precise terms.

Ellesmere. Good—that's true, I daresay. However, I still venture to think that metaphors have done at least as much harm by introducing falsehood as they have by representing truth. But you have made a good plea, and you may indulge in as many metaphors as you like. Proceed.

Milverton. Then, too, if it be not too bold to say so

on behalf of any men, may there not be something vicarious in the sufferings of men of genius? Again, the work before them sits heavy and grievous on their minds. Moreover, when you talk of their wisdom and what you extract from it, though I admit the difference between a wise man, or a man of genius, and a fool is colossal to us, yet you must recollect that, as measured against the great verities it is engaged with, it may be very, very small indeed.

Dunsford. We cannot keep that too much in mind: and I would say, though you may both think it commonplace, that the wisdom or insight you have been talking of, may be that which the Scriptures call foolishness.

Ellesmere. I have had in my thoughts, Dunsford, religious men, or what we consider such, as well as others.

Milverton. Then another thing, we know so little of men, that we can hardly judge of their moods. I was very much struck the other day with a quotation from Seneca, which was in the margin of one of these old Spanish historians I am looking into just now. "Levis est dolor qui capere consilium potest."

Ellesmere. That is a good deal deeper than Seneca used to go in my time, when I looked into him.

Dunsford. Having to do with Nero would make a man think deeply upon some subjects—especially upon concealed griefs and fears.

Milverton. But to go back to our subject, for I have more to say yet. I question whether even men of genius have ever suffered more than dull men, or merely clever men, with one idea which has sunk under them—a small

ambitious man, for instance, utterly unsuccessful in his schemes, or a man set on one affection which turns out ill. Genius is multiform and artistic: it twines beautiful garlands round the images of past hopes, knowing all the time, as well as other men, that it is only adoring what is lifeless.

Dunsford. This world is a world of trial, not of completion and attainment in any way. You expect more of clear and distinct gain than you ought, Ellesmere.

Milverton. I somehow fancy we are a little wrong in our general notions about this world being a place of trial; I would rather, if I might say so, call it a place of education, of continuous creation, than of trial. It may not be, as we sometimes pronounce, that life, the life of souls, is sent here to see what will become of it, to see whether it is good or bad, but to form it, and further it, in accordance with which, it may be (as the author of *The Natural History of Enthusiasm* would say *), that all are getting the fittest education for them. The hardest criminal, for instance, what can subdue him into humanity

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* This is doubtless the passage which Milverton had in his mind:—

"The world of nature affords no instances of complicated and exact contrivances, comparable to that which so arranges the vast chaos of contingencies as to produce, with unerring precision, a special order of events adapted to the character of every individual of the human family. Amid the whirl of myriads of fortuities, the means are selected and combined for constructing as many independent machineries of moral discipline as there are moral agents in the world; and each apparatus is at once complete in itself, and complete as part of a universal movement."

like the having committed crime? It may be, too, that men take their gains with them. A man's insight (what little he can get) may not therefore be unprofitable to him, Ellesmere, or be otherwise than insight, though it cannot be expressed in joy and serenity here. However this may be, I think it is perhaps nearer the truth to look upon this world as one of education than of trial.

Ellesmere. Also a world to live in. It has a substantive existence of its own, which we should make what we can of. It does not become us to depreciate time present too much. Here we are, with a great deal to look upon, and use, and understand, if we can.

Milverton. Yes; it is a part of education, and not the least, to deal with the present steadily and healthily.

Dunsford. How very few, for example, make a tithe of what they might out of the everyday beauty of Nature. They come crying to it sometimes and asking for peace and repose from it.

Milverton. I quite agree with you, if you mean that few of us enjoy enough the beauty we ought to see every day about us, and which should go to form the substance of our day's delight. But I doubt whether the contemplation of inanimate Nature will do for us what poets sometimes imagine it will in the way of soothing. To look upon Nature, to get into the forest or out upon the moor, is no doubt a delightful escape from the teasing ways of man. But there is, perhaps, an aching of the heart as well as a soothing in much contemplation of still life. Where I think there is most consolation is in the immensity of creation, in the vigour and pertinacity of life: the most wounded heart, considering these things,

can throw its griefs into the vast mass of life, see that there are other things beside it, have an impression that there is a scheme of creation large enough to answer all the demands of vexed imagination. Herein, I think, the results of science minister much comfort to the mind.

Ellesmere. Some of us, speaking so coldly of still life, hardly deserve, I think, to look over these beautiful downs.

Milverton. Let us not mind that, if we can in any way deserve to look up at the stars sometimes. But we must be moving homewards, unless we mean to find our way by starlight: and even now I think I see some "bright particular" stars that will not wait for darkness to be somewhat seen. Ah! beautiful creations, it is not in guiding us over the seas of our little planet, but out of the dark waters of our own perturbed minds, that we may make to ourselves the most of your significance.

We returned home, not sorry to be mostly silent as we went, and glad that our friendship was so assured that we could be silent without the slightest danger of offence.

CHAPTER III.

To enable my readers to understand this chapter, I must first trouble them with some domestic circumstances. Whether it was from our excursion to the downs mentioned in the last chapter, or from some other cause, I do not know, but at this time I became so unwell as to be unable to leave my room. It would have been a great deprivation to me not to know something about the conversation before and after Milverton's next reading, so I resolved to send over to Worth-Ashton one who might take my place and bring me some account of what was said.

My home is graced by the presence of my sister, Mrs. Daylmer, and her daughter Lucy. Daylmer and I were fellow-collegians and intimate friends, and our friendship led to a union between the families. Men of my standing may recollect what a scholar Daylmer was; and though it is a trivial thing to recall, yet some may remember a translation of his into Latin Alcaics of that magnificent chorus in the *Antigone*

about love,* which translation made some noise amongst us when we were freshmen. Daylmer died young, leaving some few results of his scholarship, which yet remain with me in manuscript. Ever since his death my sister and my niece have lived with me. My sister manages the house for me, and does not leave me much to do as regards the management of myself. But I must not complain, as it is a great thing to be loved and cared for by anybody; and then, too, my sister (her name is Marian) is always so right and reasonable, as she proves to me that what I want now is inconsistent with what I wanted on some other occasion, or would not do for me upon some former showing of mine, or would not be proper with my position in the parish. Somehow I seem to walk between walls which I am said to have helped to build myself. I should rather like to look into the open country sometimes. However, Marian is a good creature, and totally unconscious of wishing to manage any one. I do not know what I should do without her. Did she ever look into a book, I would not say all that I have just said, but it is quite confidential with the public.

My niece Lucy is my darling. I have educated

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* Ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν.—Soph. *Ant.* v. 781.

her myself. I hope I have not done unwisely, but I have taught her Greek; for I thought she should know something of the study in which her father excelled, and be able to form some notion of his great powers of criticism. We often talk of him, and I think we are able to do this much better as she knows more of what were his favourite studies.

Lucy has long been a great favourite of Milverton's; and in former days (for he had then too the same theory he has given us in his essay on education, of the advantage of some training for women that should sternly exercise the reason) he essayed, I recollect, to teach her Euclid, which, considering he expected the most unreasonably swift apprehension and progress, went off very well. I knew he would not take it ill, if I sent her over in my place; and that she would bring me back some report of the conversation. In this she seems to have succeeded very well.

Milverton and Ellesmere were already out upon the lawn expecting me, when Lucy and her mother entered the gate at Worth-Ashton.

Ellesmere. This is an honour, Miss Daylmer. "Gratior it dies." Latin is not rude in the presence of learned young ladies, you know.

Milverton. I hope, Mrs. Daylmer, there is nothing the matter with Dunsford?

Mrs. Daylmer. He is not well, I am sorry to say, and so sends Lucy to pick up what she can for him of your talk to bring back and amuse him with. I know you gentlemen will not care to have me with you: so I will go and chat with Phœbe, and see the new dairy. How can you both be so foolish as to be lying on the grass, as you were when we came in? That is, I am sure, the way in which my brother gets ill, and I shall not allow him to come over if you don't take more care of him.

Ellesmere. My good Mrs. Daylmer, if some twenty years ago you had kept our friend out of the Combination room at —— College, it might have been more to the purpose: for my opinion is that it is the gout and nothing else which——

Lucy. No, Mr. Ellesmere, my uncle says not.

Ellesmere. I know he does not choose to call it by that name. I do not see why not. I always thought it was very respectable in the country to have the gout. But we have a long chapter before us, as I see from that solemn bulk of paper, and so we must not talk any more just now. You do not know, Miss Daylmer, what you have before you to endure, or you would have preferred to have had, yourself, a fit of the gout—at least such a fit as would not have prevented you from going to a dance the next day.

Milverton. Do not be frightened, Lucy; the subject for to-day's reading shall not be very terrific in the way of dulness; but shall rather touch on matters which any lady may like to consider, and the regulation of which lies entirely within her province.

Ellesmere (muttering to himself). "The suckling of fools," an essay by Leonard Milverton; "The chronicling

of small beer," an historical attempt by John Ellesmere. I am merely running over in my mind the catalogue of essays we keep by us, Miss Daylmer, for the edification of our female friends when they are good enough to honour our readings with their presence.

Milverton. It is on the "art of living."

Ellesmere. Oh, I had forgotten to mention that essay, Miss Daylmer; that is our essay on cookery—the one we always begin with in reading to ladies; as Milverton said, "entirely within their province." I wish they paid more attention to it; but people seldom do attend to things within their province.

Milverton. Do not mind his impertinence, Lucy.

Lucy. I am keeping my attention, Mr. Milverton, for what I am sure I shall like better than even Mr. Ellesmere's witty sayings. Pray do not let us detain you from beginning.

Mr. Milverton then read the following essay:—

ON THE ART OF LIVING.

IT has often occurred to me to think how inappropriate is the eulogy of the moralist or the preacher on the life of the rich and powerful, when, for the sake of contrast, it is set up as if it were the height of human success, at least in the way in which it professes to succeed. You would think, to hear a preacher of this kind, that the lives of the people in

the upper classes were something really comfortable, genial, and beautiful. To be sure, he intimates that all this joy and beauty is likely to be paid for by some dire equivalent hereafter; but of its existence here he entertains no doubt. To me, on the contrary, since my first entrance into society, the life of those who are considered to be the most highly favoured by the God of this world has always appeared poor, mean, joyless, and in some respects even squalid.

The cottage of a poor man is certainly a sad affair to contemplate. Should an average specimen of this kind of building of our date be dug up hereafter, when the world has largely improved in these things (if it does), this cottage will not give a very exalted idea of the civilization of the nineteenth century. But then, considering the narrowness of means of the owner (for life, except with considerable dexterity and knowledge, cannot be made very beautiful on an income varying from six shillings to twelve shillings a week), this cottage is not so bad. Its defects are negative, whereas the new-built house of a rich man often exemplifies a career of blunders.

Not only where masses of men are congregated together, but even in mansions built in solitary places, the provisions for pure air, for water, and for the means of cleanliness of all kinds, are defective and

absurd; and even amongst the most practical people in the world, science is but beginning to be wedded to the arts of life. I think it may also be observed that, independently of these errors committed with regard to scientific matters, such as change of air, maintenance of warmth and the supply of light, there is also a singular inaptitude of means to ends, which prevails generally throughout the human aids and appliances for living—I mean dress, houses, equipages, and household furniture. The causes of this unsuitableness of means to ends lie very deep in human nature and in the present form of human society. I attribute them chiefly to the imitative nature of the great bulk of mankind, and to the division of labour, which latter practice being carried to a great extent in every civilized state, renders a man expert in his own business, but timid even in judging of what he has not to make, but only to use. The result is, I believe, that more than half of what we do to procure good is needless or mischievous: in fact, that more than half of the labour and capital of the world is wasted: in savage life, by not knowing how to compass what is necessary; in civilized life, by the pursuit of what is needless.

It is almost impossible to attribute too much effect to this quality of imitativeness, as most men rule their wants by next to no thought of their own, but simply

by what they see around them. To give examples: There are very few cities, for instance, in the world where it would be more convenient to have porches, or covered entrances to the houses, than in London. There cannot well be a city more devoid of such things. Again, there can hardly be a more effectual arrangement for producing a rapid influx of cold air than a modern carriage; indeed it is constructed in every way upon wrong principles. A person going to buy such a thing would be glad to have ventilation without draught, to have a carriage roomy and yet light; but he is shown what is the fashion, and adopts it. Dress furnishes a still more striking illustration of imitation carried to an extreme. Here, at the sacrifice of comfort, time, and money, we follow the schemes of vanity and ugliness; and adopt permanently what were the fleeting notions of some of the most foolish of mankind. I can imagine that some of my readers who have never thought upon these subjects would contest the point as regards the above instances; but I will give others which they cannot contend against.

Upon some occasion in former days, perhaps upon a sudden attack of a town, the great clock of the place, which they were probably putting up or mending, was left with one hand. This you would have imagined would have been considered a defect, and would have

been remedied the first time the town became quiet. But no; like many other things, not having been finished at the time it was begun, it remained unfinished; after remaining long in that state, people began to think that this defect was intentional; some foolish person imitated it; in the race of folly there are always many runners, and the result in this particular case is, that there are scores of clocks set up in public places, which exercise the patience and the ingenuity of the hurried and vexed spectator, who, if he has good eyesight and some power of calculating, may make an approximation to the time which the two hands would have told him accurately at once. Another instance occurs to me of a similar kind. There is a large and increasing portion of the human species who have to make constant reference to dictionaries. Now, there are two instances in the alphabet of two consecutive letters which were in former times one letter. The words beginning with these letters are often still arranged as if they belonged to one letter. Hence there constantly arises a confusion in those parts of the dictionary alluded to, which I will venture to say has cost every studious person much loss of time and some loss of temper (for study does not always render the temper impregnable), and which loss of time and temper they

may attribute entirely to the unwise imitativeness which has led one maker of dictionaries to follow another maker of dictionaries in confounding his I's and his J's, his U's and his V's, just as one sheep succeeds another in jumping needlessly over some imaginary obstacle.

Another instance occurs to me. Travellers tell us that there is a nation very wise and thoughtful in many matters, who, nevertheless, choose to have all their most important documents (such, for example, as those used in conveyance of land) written upon leaves of such extent that you can hardly hold them in both hands, and all along in one line, so that it is very difficult to go from line to line down the page. It is curious, however, to notice how injured humanity protects itself; for these documents are written in such jargon, and so many unnecessary words are put in, that it does not much matter whether you do skip a line or not in attempting to go regularly down the page. This people is very skilful in building boats, and is perpetually trying improvements in that art; but as regards these wide pages of jargon, no race can be more contemptibly imitative and conservative of wrong.

The above have chiefly been physical instances of the ill effects of imitation as regards the art of living;

yet these are but trifling. Men might live with very foolish furniture around them, with very ill-arranged dictionaries and worse grammars, with very ridiculous equipages, with absurdly ill-built houses, noisy and smoky, mostly of one pattern, and that a bad one; nay, even in an ill-ventilated town, where every form of disease is rising up and curling about them, which fortunately they do not see: in the midst of all this, men might live happily, if all were well in their social regulations and social intercourse, if they had found out the art of living in these important respects. But, as it is, how poor a thing is social intercourse! How often in society a man goes out, from interested or vain motives, at most unseasonable hours, in very uncomfortable clothes, to sit or stand in a constrained position, inhaling tainted air, suffering from great heat, and his sole occupation or amusement being to talk—only to talk. I do not mean to say that there are not delightful meetings in society, which all who were present at remember afterwards, where the party has been well chosen, the host and hostess genial (a matter of the first necessity), where wit has been kind as well as playful, where information has known how to be silent as well as how to speak, where good-humour to the absent as well as to the present has assured the company that they were

among good people, where ostentation has gone away to some more gilded rooms, and where a certain feeling of regard and confidence has spread throughout the company, so that each man has spoken out from his heart. But these are sadly rare; they are days, as the Romans would say, to be marked with chalk; and it would not fatigue any man to mark those which he himself has experienced. The main current of society is very dreary and dull, and not the less so for its restlessness. The chief hindrances to its improvement are of a moral nature, and may be placed under the following heads.

These hindrances to the pleasure and profit of society (and by society I do not mean the society of the great world, as we call it, but the humblest and smallest reunions down to the domestic circle), these hindrances may be thus enumerated—want of truth, vanity, shyness, imitation, foolish concern about trifles, want of faithfulness to society, which leads to repetition and publicity, habits of ridicule, and puritanical notions.

I began my list with want of truth, which I have always contended is as fatal, if not more so, to enjoyment as it is to business. From want of the boldness which truth requires, people are driven into uncongenial society, into many modes of needless and

painful ostentation, and into various pretences, excuses, and all sorts of vexatious dissimulation. The spirit of barter is carried into the amusements and enjoyments of life; and, as in business, the want of truth prevents you often from knowing what the person you are dealing with really wishes and means; so in pleasure, you are equally unable to know whether you are gratifying others; and you offer what is not wanted and what you do not wish to offer, to one who accepts it only from the fear of giving offence to you.

Shyness comes next in our catalogue; for I believe, if most young persons were to tell us what they had suffered from shyness upon their entrance into society, it would well deserve to be placed next to want of truth as a hindrance to the enjoyment of society. Now, admitting that there is a certain degree of graceful modesty mixed up with this shyness, very becoming in the young, there is at the same time a great deal of needless care about what others think and say. In fact, it proceeds from a painful egotism, sharpened by needless self-examinations and foolish imaginations, in which the shy youth or maiden is tormented by his or her personality, and is haunted by imagining that he or she is the centre of the circle—the observed of all observers. The great cause of

this shyness is not sufficiently accustoming children to society, or making them suppose that their conduct in it is a matter of extreme importance, and especially in urging them from their earliest youth by this most injurious of all sayings, If you do this or that, what will be said, what will be thought of you?—thus referring the child, not to religion, not to wisdom, not to virtue, not even to the opinion of those whose opinion ought to have weight, but to the opinion of whatever society he may chance to come into. I often think that the parent, guardian, or teacher who has happily omitted to instil this vile prudential consideration, or enabled the child to resist it, even if he, the teacher, has omitted much good advice and guidance, has still done better than that teacher or parent who has filled the child to the brim with good moral considerations, and yet has allowed this one piece of arrant worldliness to creep in. We are now, however, only considering its injurious effect as regards the enjoyment of society, which nobody can doubt.

I have spoken of vanity as one of the moral hindrances to the pleasure and profit to be derived from society. There is a certain degree of vanity which, often accompanying good animal spirits, prompts a man to endeavour to please and to shine

in society; but any considerable extent of vanity is likely to be injurious to the peace of society. Under the influence of this passion, a man demands much, gives little, is easily offended, apt to be dishonest in conversation, and altogether is so prone to be small-minded, restless, and unjust, that I think vanity must be looked upon as a great hindrance to the welfare of social intercourse.

I come now to foolish concern about trifles—a besetting error in highly-civilized communities. In these societies there are many things, both physical and intellectual, which are outwardly complete, highly polished and varnished; much, too, is in its proper place, and corresponds with what it ought to correspond to,

> "Grove nods to grove, each alley has its brother;"

so that at last there comes a morbid excitement to have every little thing and circumstance square and neat, which neither Nature nor man will allow. Hence the pleasure of visits and entertainments, and in general the plans and projects of social intercourse, are at the mercy of small accidents, absurd cares, and trifling offences. When this care for small things is combined with an intense fear of the opinion of others, a state of mind is generated which will

neither allow the possessor of it to be happy in himself or herself, nor permit those about him or her to enjoy any peace or comfort for long. It is, of course, a pre-eminent hindrance to the blessing of social intercourse.

The next hindrance I shall mention is one rarely commented upon, but which I maintain to be very important—want of faithfulness to society. A man should consider that, in whatever company he is thrown, there are certain duties incident upon him in respect of that association. The first of these is reticence about what he hears in that society. We see this as regards the intercourse of intimate friends. If your friend in a quiet walk with you were to tell you of some of his inner troubles and vexations, you would not consider yourself at liberty to mention these things in general society the next day. So, in all social intercourse there is an implied faithfulness of the members of the society one to another; and if this faithfulness were well maintained, not only would a great deal of pain and mischief be prevented, but men, knowing that they were surrounded by people with a nice sense of honour in this respect, would be more frank and explicit in all they said and did. As it is, a thoughtful and kind-hearted man is often obliged to make his discourse very barren lest it should be

repeated to a circle for whom it was not intended, by whom it could not be understood, and who can rarely have before them the circumstance which led to its being uttered. The fault of indiscreet publication is very prevalent in the present day, and has, I have no doubt, thrown a general constraint over all communications, personal or by letter, amongst those very persons with whom unconstrained communication would be most valuable.

I pass to another hindrance to the well-being of social intercourse, namely, the habit of ridicule. There is a light, jesting, flippant, unkind mode of talking about things and persons very common in society, exceedingly different from wit, which stifles good conversation, and gives a sense of general hostility rather than sociability—as if men came together chiefly for the purpose of ridiculing their neighbours and of talking slightly about matters of great concern. I am not sure that this conduct in society is not a result rather than a cause,—a result of vanity, want of truth, want of faithfulness, and other hindrances which we have been considering. It certainly bespeaks a lamentable want of charity, and shows that those who indulge in it are sadly ignorant of the dignity of social intercourse, and of what a grand thing it might be.

Lastly, there is the want of something to do besides talking, which must be put down as one of the greatest drawbacks to the pleasantness, as well as usefulness, of social intercourse. Puritanical notions have gone some way in occasioning this want, by forbidding many innocent or indifferent amusements. But I suspect that anybody who should study human nature much would find that it was one of the most dangerous amusements to bring people together to talk who have but little to say. The more variety men have in their amusements the better; and I confess that I am one of those who think that games are often very good instructors of mankind, and as little mischievous as anything else they do.

But this consideration of the want of something to do besides talking leads naturally to that branch of the art of living which is connected with accomplishments. In this we have hitherto been singularly neglectful; and our poor and arid education has often made time hang heavy on our hands, given opportunity for scandal, occasioned domestic dissension, and prevented the just enjoyment we should have had of the gifts of Nature. More large and general cultivation of music, of the fine arts, of manly and graceful exercises, of various minor branches of science and natural philosophy, will, I am persuaded, enhance

greatly the pleasure of society, and mainly in this, that it will fill up that want of something to do besides talking, which is so grievously felt at present. A group of children, with their nursery-chairs as play-things, are often able to make a better and pleasanter evening of it than an assembly of fine people in London, where nobody has anything to do, where nothing is going on but vapid conversation, where the ladies dare not move freely about, and where a good chorus, a childish game, or even the liberty to work or read, would be a perfect godsend to the whole assembly. This, however, is but a very small part of the advantage and aid to the art of living which would flow from a greatly widened basis of education in accomplishments and what are now deemed minor studies. I am persuaded that the whole of life would be beautified and vivified by them; and one great advantage, which I do not fear to repeat, though I have urged it two or three times before in different places, is that from this variety of cultivation various excellences would be developed in persons whose natures, not being suitable for the few things cultivated and rewarded at present, are thick with thorns and briers, and present the appearance of waste land, whereas, if sown with the fit seed, and tended in a proper manner, they would

come into some sort of cultivation, would bring forth something good, perhaps something which is excellent of its kind. Such people, who now lie sunk in self-disrespect, would become useful, ornamental, and therefore genial; they would be an assistance to society instead of a weight upon it.

Another great matter as regards the art of living is the art of living with inferiors. A house may be ever so well arranged for domestic and social comfort, the principal inmates of it well-disposed and accomplished people, their circumstances of life felicitous; yet if there is a want of that harmony which should extend throughout every house, embracing all the members of the household, there is an under-current of vexation sufficient to infect and deaden all the above-named advantages. To obviate this is one of the great difficulties of modern life, a difficulty not only great in itself, but largely aggravated by mismanagement for many generations. In dealing with servants, we have to deal with some of the worst-educated people in the country—not only ill-instructed for the peculiar functions they have to undertake, but ill-educated both in mind and soul, and having all the insubordination of extreme ignorance. This will improve, however; and perhaps one of the greatest

rewards the rich will enjoy for having of late years encouraged and facilitated education amongst the poor, will arise from their being furnished with a wiser, more amiable, and therefore more governable, set of dependants. The duties of masters, too, are often most inadequately fulfilled, so that a man who wishes to act rightly in this respect often finds that he has to work upon bad material which has already been badly treated. Still, with all these disadvantages, it is surprising how much may be done with servants by firmness, kindness, geniality, and just familiarity. Under the head of kindness I should particularly wish to include full employment. The master who keeps one servant more than he has absolutely need for is not only a mischief to society, but is unkind to that servant and to all his fellow-servants; for what is more cruel to a vacant mind than to leave it half-employed?

A master, such as I would have him, should not only exercise passive kindness, but active kindness, towards his servants—should interest himself in their relationships, partake their hopes and fears, be watchful to provide amusements for them, and should look upon them as his children once or twice removed. Instances of ingratitude and intractability, partial defeats as well as partial successes, such a man will be sure to meet with; but, at any rate, he will have

done his best to produce that harmony in his household which, viewed merely with regard to the enjoyment of life, must be looked upon as one of the most desirable attainments in the art of living.

It may be thought that in the course of this essay the ends proposed have not been very great, and that too much mention has been made of such words as enjoyment. But at least the means proposed have not been ignoble ones; and I am convinced that, in the furtherance of the art of living, true enjoyment would be often found to march hand in hand with economy, with truth, and especially with kindness and thoughtfulness for those around us. Benevolent people of the present day are constantly investigating the life of the poorer classes, in order to make it more comely, more dignified, more enjoyable. There is no doubt that much may be done in this direction; but I contend that the standard of what is beautiful in living requires to be raised generally, and it seems to me that the life of the poor will not be well arranged while that of so many of the rich remains vapid, insincere, unenjoyable, and unadorned.

Ellesmere. I agree with you in all you have said in dispraise. The many failures of civilized life make one long for something more free and wider; and would prove one of the main incentives to colonization, except that people find out the insipidity of civilized life when they are too stiff and rooted to think of going to a young colony. I was quite surprised the other day to find even in such a writer as Sydney Smith, who, I should have imagined, would have been pretty well satisfied with the present state of things in our old world, a sentence or two intimating that he conceived how people might go into distant climes to get rid of some of the nuisances of civilization,—a passage, in fact, which reminded me of that in *Eothen*, where the traveller exclaims, "The first night of your first campaign (though you be but a mere peaceful campaigner) is a glorious time in your life. It is so sweet to find one's self free from the stale civilization of Europe! Oh, my dear ally! when first you spread your carpet in the midst of these eastern scenes, do think for a moment of those your fellow-creatures that dwell in squares and streets, and even (for such is the fate of many!) in actual country-houses; think of the people that are 'presenting their compliments' and 'requesting the honour,' and 'much regretting,'—of those that are pinioned at dinner-tables, or stuck up in ball-rooms, or cruelly planted in pews—ay, think of these, and so remembering how many poor devils are living in a state of utter respectability, you will glory the more in your own delightful escape."

Milverton. On the other hand, I often feel how much might be made of society here. Whenever you go into

any neighbourhood, or penetrate into any small circle of society, you are surprised at the agreeable people there are in that quarter—such people as you thought belonged only to your own particular circle. Yet it seems as if there was a want of some master mind devoted to the arts of social life, which should bring out the good qualities of those around it, and sun them into more active being.

Ellesmere. This is all meant to be carried home, Miss Daylmer, to the Grange, that your uncle may be induced to believe that Milverton thinks there are civilized people even in these remote parts of the earth, but you know better.

Lucy. Having only heard that part of the wit and wisdom of London which you, Mr. Ellesmere, and Mr. Milverton, bring down to us occasionally, I cannot pretend to judge of its intellectual resources; but I recollect when I was reading the *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, that on some occasion of his being in town, he dined with a company whom he called the wits, a short time afterwards at a dinner-party of lawyers, a day or two after that at a dinner-party of bishops; and he says that the lawyers beat the wits, and the bishops the lawyers. Now we have plenty of clergymen about here, and it is from clergymen that bishops are made. For my own part, I am afraid that I am simple enough to prefer the society of the old women and children whom I go to visit in our parish to all that London could give me.

Ellesmere. Ah, you would find that most of us had forgotten our Greek, Miss Daylmer, and that we should

form but indifferent companions to a modern version of Lady Jane Grey.

Milverton. Do not answer him any more, Lucy : you see he is obliged to have recourse to personalities.

Ellesmere. Just as if that Scott story was not aimed at me. But, Milverton, you were going to say something.

Milverton. Yes. I was going to say that I do not think sufficient credit is given to people for eminence in social qualities. To take an instance, you know our old college friend ——. Well, you know what a serviceable man he is in society, how sure he is in any company to promote the happiness and amusement of all around him. His wit, Lucy, is of the lambent and not of the forked kind : it lights up every topic with grace and variety, and it hurts nobody. I suppose no one ever left his company aggrieved by any saying of his. Very often you can carry away nothing that he has said, for his humour has been continuous, and a pailful of water from any river will no more give a notion of its beauty than a quotation from his conversation of its richness, grace, and drollery. I do not know whether —— is, or will be, successful in his profession ; that greatly depends upon other people ; but to my mind he is a successful man. If he does not, however, obtain professional success, he may have all the graces and merits in the world, but most people will pronounce his life a failure. Then you have some man of keen intellect, eminently disagreeable, living on the abuses of his age——

Ellesmere. Do not be personal, Milverton.

Milverton. And this man makes an abundance of money or gains great station, and you run after him and

shout his praises and desire to have his countenance on canvas or in marble. When I look round upon some of the statues in the world, I am afraid of the indignation and contempt which rise up in my mind.

Ellesmere. Whew! it is pretty evident that our presiding friend Dunsford is not here. When these outwardly calm and placid men do break out, Miss Daylmer, it is somewhat volcanic.

Lucy. I have heard my uncle say, Mr. Ellesmere, that he prefers downright anger to a sneer.

Ellesmere. How, womanlike, somebody always shelters herself behind the sayings of some one else.

Milverton. I need not have expressed myself so warmly—nor so unjustly; for nobody pretends that notoriety, the cause of many a statue being set up, is a sure measure of merit.

Lucy. Never mind, Mr. Milverton; I will only repeat to my uncle just so much of your outbreak as will enable him to understand Mr. Ellesmere's ill-nature and sarcasm.

Ellesmere. Equitable, certainly: a rustic Daniel come to judgment! This is the way I am always treated here; none of you will buy a bust of me, it is clear.

But to go back to the subject. If you are not quite satisfied with the state of society in this country, do you know of any other people who fulfil better your idea of the art of living, or who might do so? The Spaniards, for instance; I have heard you frequently praise them for various things. Do they make life so very successful a transaction?

Milverton. I have been but too short a time in their

country to speak with any confidence, but I will give you my impressions.

Ellesmere. You may see a great deal of people in travelling with them and amongst them; though of course there are things in a foreign country which you may utterly misunderstand, or pass by, if you do not get into society, and that, of course, requires time.

Milverton. They seemed to me a most intelligent people—admirably courteous, without any of the mere grimace of courtesy—very courageous, as many a story of their late wars will testify—and, altogether, I must say, not unlike ourselves, especially the Castilians, except that they are more courteous and less enterprising; and to answer specially the question you first addressed to me about them, I think they bid fair to understand the art of living as well as any nation on the earth.

Ellesmere. Well, how is it that they make such a bad business of it in the way of government?

Milverton. Nations, like individuals, have what, for want of a more pious name, we may call their fortune, good and ill. These people have had a series of untoward circumstances to contend against—their monarchs holding other dominions—too much gold coming in upon them from the Indies, and standing in the way of home culture and domestic enterprise—then disputed successions for many, many years—their contests at present having little or no principle in them, but being chiefly personal contests. These things, or things like them, they used to say to me themselves.

Ellesmere. They were aware then of their political state?

Milverton. Thoroughly. Moreover, in all classes, as far as I saw, the national feeling is very strong. I have before me now the elaborate bow which a muleteer, with whom I was coming from the Escurial, made to me on my happening in conversation about his country to utter some just praise of it. He ran on from my side before me to the middle of the road, and receiving me, as it were, made a bow of which this is but a very faint and angular representation.

Ellesmere. Well, their time may come again.

Milverton. If you mean for national pre-eminence, I do not know that I wish it for them. Of course one would wish the government to be much more stable and well directed than it has been. But withal, the bulk of the people at present seems to me anything but ill off. These southern nations have a way of enjoying life and a power of lazy contentment not altogether to be despised.

But to go back for a moment to their intelligence. The general conversation in a diligence was almost always good. I have tried, for the purpose of learning the language, to get them to give me the distinctions between words nearly allied—such as in English, pretty, handsome, beautiful, elegant, the proper use of which it would require some nicety to explain to a foreigner.

Ellesmere. And they managed it well?

Milverton. Yes. Another thing struck me much. As far as I could see, they are an accurate people, not pretending to understand things before they do. I always augur much from that in a man, or in a people.

Ellesmere. As to the country itself, I suppose that is magnificent. Tell us something about it; but do not be

voluminous. I very soon get tired of hearing other people's travels. Tell us, for instance, about the Cathedral at Seville, the town of Cadiz, and the Alhambra.

Milverton. Well, the three things you have just mentioned did not lose any of their hold on the imagination by being seen. They quite came up to what has been said of them.

Ellesmere. The Moorish architecture delighted you, then?

Milverton. Yes: not only in their palaces but in their houses. Those Moors knew well that important part of the art of living which consists in building a house, therein being very superior to the Frankish nations.

Ellesmere. It is very well to tell us, as you did just now, that things come up to the descriptions of them, which is like a novelist "drawing a veil" over the feelings of his hero and heroine, when they become troublesome and difficult to describe. But now sit down again, and describe to Miss Daylmer and me what the Alhambra is like. I have read no description, I never do read such things. Miss Daylmer has, I suppose; for every earthly thing is in Pinnock.

Lucy. I am sure, Mr. Milverton, you cannot resist such an encouraging invitation to describe. I will engage to put aside all the information I have derived from Pinnock, and will listen, like the dutiful pupil I once was, to you with the proper blankness of mind which Mr. Ellesmere vouches for himself.

Milverton. Well, come with me then in imagination to the Generalife, not a part of the Alhambra, but another palace close to it and more elevated, the summer palace

of the Moorish kings, built exactly in the same style as the Alhambra. We will imagine ourselves to have got to the highest point of it, or to be looking down from the gallery which faces southwards. Beneath us, far beneath us, at the base of the palace, lies the town, in itself an object of great beauty. To the left, still close to us, the rocks down there have holes in them, the habitations of the gipsies. Beyond is the beautiful Vega, a vast green-plain with water running through it. The whole scene is enclosed by mountains, forming an amphitheatre such as we might think fit for the tournament of the world, or rather for the world's empire to be fought for. Westward, the sun, as I saw it, is declining over the mountains: we look to the east, and high up above us, and seemingly close to us, lies the Sierra Nevada, its snow coloured by the setting sun. Fed by that perpetual snow, streams are rushing through the elevated court where we stand, and are then seen coursing down the gardens and bubbling over the fountains, making their way to the green Vega. The luxury of Heat and the luxury of Cold meet here: and find rooms worthy such great powers to revel in. Here (and how rare it is) man, instead of defacing nature, has adorned it. These light columns; this profusion of ornament which yet never intrudes; this aptitude of the building for the climate and the people and the place, make us not ashamed of our fellow-men having built there. I strive to see it all again; but there are some things I cannot see: and yet I turned and looked and came again, and looked again and tried to impress it on my brain that it might be with me sometimes hereafter.

Lucy. But you kept a diary?

Milverton. No, Lucy; nor would I if I were to go again. It is not words that will do. I could write many words about it now, but they would not bring back to me what I want, though they might have some appropriateness. I thought of this the other day when I was looking over your copy of Milnes's Poems. I know he is a great favourite of yours. There is a sonnet giving the advice which I have already taken.

Lucy. *Lessons to Poets?*

Milverton. Yes, that is the title, I think: only it must be adapted in my case to prose writers. But do you recollect it, Lucy, well enough to give Ellesmere any notion of it?

Lucy. I do recollect it, I believe, but I do not much like repeating it, because Mr. Ellesmere will be sure to tear it to pieces, if he is not in the humour to hear it, and though I do not mind what he says to me, I do not like to have any favourite bit of poetry shaken about in his critical mouth as that bit of cloth is by Rollo.

Ellesmere. Upon my word, Attic maiden, you are very unfair; just as if, too, it were anything remarkable, a man's criticism depending upon his humours.

Milverton. He deserves the sonnet for that satire on his own tribe, Lucy.

Lucy.

> Try not, or murmur not if tried in vain,
> In fair rememberable words to set
> Each scene or presence of especial gain,
> As hoarded gems in precious cabinet.
> Simply enjoy the present loveliness;—
> Let it become a portion of your being;
> Close your glad gaze, but see it none the less,
> No clearer with your eye, than spirit, seeing.

> And, when you part at last, turn once again,
> Swearing that beauty shall be unforgot :
> So in far sorrows it shall ease your pain,
> In distant struggles it shall calm your strife,
> And in your further and serener life,
> Who says that it shall be remembered not ? "

Milverton. It is excellent advice. If you make too much of diary-keeping, you blur every beautiful sight by thinking what you should write about it.

Here Mrs. Daylmer entered; the conversation took another turn; and after some mock salutations of great courtesy between my niece and Ellesmere, upon her receiving some ironical messages sent by him to me, she came away to give me the essay, and to relate the above conversation.

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